

Texas Extension Specialists Association

Winter Board Meeting December 3, 2019
Texas 4-H Conference Center, Lake Brownwood, TX



Attending: Greg Kaase, Will Keeling, Philip Shackelford, Billy E. Warrick, Dean McCorkle (arrived at), Rebekka Dudensing, Sandra Pierce, and Janet Hurley

Prior to the official Board Meeting Greg Kaase read a letter from Joe Mask at 1:16 PM. In this letter, Joe resigned from TESA citing that he would be leaving AgriLife Extension in mid-December 2019. This vacancy meant that Greg Kaase would move from President – elect to President for the Association. After reviewing the current by-laws, Dean McCorkle membership chair will recruit for this empty position. At the same time, Michelle Payne, TESA Historian also resigned as she moved from Extension to a campus position.

1. Call to Order by Greg Kaase at 1:27 PM

2. Introductions – none

3. Appointment of Parliamentarian – Philip Shackelford

4. Approve Minutes of Previous meeting (Hurley) - Summer Board and Business meeting minutes were circulated via email. Comments were submitted and a final hard copy was shared with Board members present. A Digital Copy can be found on the [TESA Website](#)

5. Review and/or Revise Agenda – nothing to add

6. Correspondence – Letter from Joe Mask resigning. Email from Michelle Payne notifying reassignment to campus.

7. 4-H Foundation Report – Kaase reported that in a phone conversation with J. Mask that all was well with the Foundation. Monty Dozier was mentioned as a replacement for this position.

8. Office/Committee Reports

a Financial - Rebekka Dudensing reported that there is \$12,489.49 in the TESA Checking account, and \$7,260.87 in the TEEFI account (where we collect credit card funds), plus our Certificates of Deposit and savings gives us \$31,720.31 in total funds as of 12/2/19.

Income As of 12/2/2019	Amount
Ag Conf Social Registration	0.0
Annual Meeting Registration	\$ 1,870.00
Membership Dues	\$ 600.00
Sponsor donations	\$ 10,950.00
Interest	\$ 116.41

Our Goals

Promote professional improvement for our members • Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas • Secure benefits collectively that cannot be obtained individually • Voice a collective opinion for recommended courses of action, changes, or needs to administrative staffs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and The Texas A&M University System

Total Income to Date 2019	\$ 13,536.41
Expense	Amount
Ag Conf Social	\$ 0
Annual meeting Costs	\$ 1,199.73
Board Expense	\$ 1,781.75
Chapter meeting	\$ 0
Professional Development * travel scholarships	\$ 2,456.38
Awards Recognition	\$ 503.75
Scholarships – 2 students	\$ 500
Support	\$ 0
Total Expenses as of 12/2/19	\$ 6,441.61

Our annual meeting expenses were largely paid in 2018.

c. Membership Rebekka reported that we have 30 paid members, 14 First Year members and 116 lifetime members. That is a total of 160 members.

d. Awards – Kay Ledbetter sent in a report that she will work on awards nominations in Spring 2020. Janet Hurley will work with Kay in March to send out a request for nominations email.

e. Scholarship – During this discussion, our group realized that Dennis Coker moved positions within AgriLife. This position change means we will need a new chairperson for this committee.

f. Professional Development – Philip Shackelford

g. Retirees – Billy Warrick reported that we have 116 Life Members as of December 2, 2019. He also reported that all the brass plates for the plaques at the 4-H Center had been engraved. They were placed on the plaques at the Center. Billy also reported that the invoice for engraving was \$143.75

h. Industry Liaison/Sponsorships – Monty Dozier sent a report to Greg Kaase since he could not be present at the meeting. Monty reported he had followed up with sponsors and felt they would be willing to sponsor again in 2020. A goal of \$10,000 for summer meeting should be achievable.

i. Website/Historian- As reported earlier Michelle Payne stepped down from this position. The Executive Board discussed finding support to work on the TESA website. Candace Foster and Diann Linger (retiree) were mentioned.

j. Others: TESA booth at new employee orientation – Kaase reported that there will be a new employee orientation in April Julie Gould volunteered to help at the event.

Discussion about recruiting new members, Greg mentioned he handed out materials at the SALE meetings. Still need leadership support to encourage Specialists to join and be active.

* Dean McCorkle arrived at 2:10 PM

k. Nominating – McCorkle reported that he will start looking for potential officers and work with DeDe Jones for Chapter Director positions.

I. Financial Audit – McCorkle reported that he and Will Keeling will conduct the audit this winter and will send the report via email to the Board. (See attached)

9. 2019 Annual Meeting follow up:

Based on the evaluations that Dean shared with the group and verbal communications, everyone enjoyed this meeting. We were able to stay under budget and all felt if we could do this again, we should.

10. New Business

- a. **2020 Annual Meeting** – The original plan to have the 2020 meeting at La Toretta changed with that hotel chain sold. Joe Mask had contacted T Bar M, another resort we had used in the past to set up our meeting. When Greg Kaase contacted T Bar M, they had sold and would not be able to host our event in summer 2020. Based on recommendations the Courtyard at New Braunfels River Village was contacted and they can host the event on July 20-22.
 - o Candace Foster will assist Greg on getting this set up for our annual meeting.
- b. **Chapter Directors Update** – DeDe Jones sent a report that she is still trying to recruit Chapter Directors.
- c. **Questions for Extension Administration** – New for this meeting, AgriLife Leadership asked that each Association submit question in writing prior to the Board meeting. This will allow leadership to look over the questions and then offer written responses as well. By doing this, the time that leadership meets with each group after the joint General Assembly will be reduced. (see attached)
- d. **Board meeting expenses** – Rebekka D. reviewed the Board expenses for this meeting. She reminded everyone to turn in their receipts for payment or reimbursement.
- e. **2020 proposed budget** – Rebekka D. led the discussion on the proposed budget. One of the items she suggested we delete is lines associated with the AgriLife Conference Social the last time that event happened was 2017. Another discussion was bringing annual meeting costs, professional development, and student scholarships back in line with our budget from 2014-2017. Part of the discussion was the amount to award for professional development scholarship. The Board decided to see what applications come in during the spring 2020 season and will revisit this item again during the summer annual meeting. Rebekka also discussed ways to help us increase and sustain revenue. After this discussion, Rebekka revised the budget she shared for discussion with the Executive Board with the following totals. Based on the budget listed below Dean McCorkle made a motion to accept the budget as suggested below. Sandra Pierce seconded that motion, and all were in favor.

Proposed for 2020	Amount
Ag Conf Social Registration * remove this as a line item	
Annual Meeting Registration	\$ 2,500.00
Membership Dues	\$ 1,000.00
Sponsor donations	\$ 11,500.00
Interest	\$ 50.00
Total Projected Revenue	\$ 15,050.00
Expense	Amount
Ag Conf Social * remove line item	

Annual meeting Costs	\$ 9,500.00
Board Expense	\$ 2,400.00
Chapter meeting	\$ 100.00
Professional Development	\$ 1,500.00
Awards Recognition	\$ 500.00
Scholarships – 2 students	\$ 1,000.00
Support	\$ 0
Total Proposed Expenses	\$ 15,000.00

- f. **Moving Winter Board Meeting Dates** – discussion to move these dates so they conflict with events in Amarillo so leadership can have to meet with groups. This would mean that the 2020 Winter Board meeting would be December 8 & 9, 2020.
- g. **Administrative Guidelines and By Law Revisions** – Janet H. brought up the revision of the by-laws and administrative guidelines. Several of the suggestions from the summer 2019 meeting for these documents will require a revision of the documents at large. Janet suggested that TESA adopt a manual like TCAAA that would allow our group to have all our roles and responsibilities in one document that can be shared with new members.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM

Due to the Amarillo Farm Show **Dr. Jeff Hyde** spoke to the Associations (General Assembly) at 4:30 PM
Directors Message Email 12/18/2019

The message Dr. Hyde gave was very similar to the email he sent out on December 20, 2019 (attached). Something not mentioned in his message that does bear mentioning here is the reworking of the Agency Strategic Plan, especially since Dr. Hyde has discussed Extension as a sustainable business model. Something that Central Leadership did in October 2019 was have a retreat with Chris Fields author and TAMU Alumni on Disrupting for Good. If you are not familiar with his book or message here is a TED talk to help explain his philosophy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5ajdDI_CDC

Using this as the foundation for how to rework the Agencies Strategic Plan Dr. Hyde and the Leadership team will determine how we remain vital when budgets are shrinking and yet our population is increasing. Our strategic plan needs to be more of a guidance document, rather than mentioning what audience we are going to target. As leadership meets this will be what each group will need to be thinking about.

Once the document comes together Leadership will work with the Professional Associations to review and give constructive feedback.

Dr. Dan Hale, Associate Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources was introduced. Dan has been with Extension since 1985 and looks forward to working with everyone as time moves forward.

This Assembly ended for the evening.

December 4, 2019 General Assembly was called to order by TAE 4-HA President Caitlin Jackson at 8:05 AM.

Dr. Angela Burkham, Executive Associate Director was our first speaker. She shared four documents with the group two of which were for Extension

Administration One Pager <https://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-02-agrilife-extension-administration.pdf>

Organizational Chart <https://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AgriLife-Extension-Organizational-Chart-2020-02-20-3.pdf>

Angela also shared the vision of the strategic plan and how the professional associations can assist with the development and feedback as leadership works on this document.

Angela also recognized several individuals and groups who received state or national awards for their work. She also wanted everyone to know that she appreciates all the hard work you do. She thanked everyone for their service.

During the evening PEAC meeting the Association Officers met with Courtney Dodd, Jeff Ripley, and Angela Burkham. One of the topics of discussion was better ways to meet with these groups more frequently. At the same time, for this winter meeting every group was asked to submit question prior to the meeting so that leadership would have a chance to see the questions, but also respond with better answers than “we’ll get back to you”. Angela stated that she hopes that this small change will help everyone in the future to allow a better dialogue between leadership and the associations and their membership.

eXtension has been something AgriLife Extension leadership has struggled with in the past. After Dr. Hyde saw what we have been spending as it relates to what we were getting for those funds, the decision was made to withdraw Texas A&M AgriLife Extension from the eXtension platform.

Another financial discussion that was covered by Burkham was regarding the South Campus Building that holds the bulk of Extension personnel. When Extension moved into this building it was to meet a rapid response to move people from other campus buildings. However, when this was done the A/C and heating system was not upgraded. The goal is to move everyone out of this facility prior to the holiday break so that construction can begin in January 2020. They hope to have everyone back on campus by Sept 2020.

Disaster Readiness and Recovery for Texas was funded during the past legislative session. As part of this program 19 new Agent positions will be created. These agent positions are designed to be the first line of defense against any disaster emergency declared in the state. Documents are being created to help better explain this program and the roles these employees add to the Agency.

Dr. Courtney Dodd, Associate Director for Health, Families and Youth Programs spoke next. She recognized that for many of us this time of transition will be challenging as we all face new roles and responsibilities.

One of the biggest changes coming is the Healthy Texas program. The intent is to take this from a program to an Institute so that priorities can be created at the system level so that funding can be more cohesive for the important work of this group. Until the Board of Regents can review and approve this new initiative, the current goal will be to focus on the 27 original counties in south TX. Leadership recognizes the agency at large will be the ones delivering future education outreach programming, but that is only one area that needs to be defined for the Institute.

The 4-H Champions School Program was another success story Dr. Dodd shared with the group. This was started as an after-school program in a school in Denton county and has now expanded statewide as way to expose 4-H kids who might not be familiar with our programs.

Something everyone should consider is how you measure and report your outcome programs. Mike Lopez and the Walk Across Texas team published in BMC Public Health [Evaluation of Walk Across Texas! – a web-based community physical activity program](#) in November. This article looked at our Agencies long standing health program Walk Across Texas which allowed us to let others know of the work we are doing.

[Dr. Rebecca Seguin-Fowler](#), associate director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and associate professor of nutrition and food sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will be overseeing the Institute and work with Extension to develop models to help our health programs that don't measure economic impact do a better job of tracking behavioral changes instead. However, these types of measure also must be reviewed since certain types of measurement might require consent or other means to collect data on plan achievements.

[Melvin Atkinson](#) has been hired as the 4-H Center Director. Cari Snider, Extension Program Specialist- 4-H Youth Development will remain as the Program Coordinator for the Texas 4-H Conference Center. Dr. Dodd also recognized Cari during the Assembly for all her hard work during the transition of leadership at the 4-H Center.

Blair Fannin, Associate Director for Communications explained that this group will have some of the more dynamic changes moving forward. As AgriLife changes its focus to more of a digital platform, changing roles within Communications will also occur. Ways that Blair wants to assist Agents and Specialists is to know what “you” need. He and the team will be looking at ways to offer training and assistance to everyone.

Something that Communications can still assist with is writing up press releases or even help proof an article for national publication (like a trade magazine). He mentioned how a tweet that goes viral can lead to national press – feral hogs went from a tweet to ABC 20/20 spotlight.

With Superior Service awards coming in January, Fannin mentioned that the goal is to have an event where the awardees are recognized and appreciated for their hard work.

He is also working on getting every Extension employee a new name badge. Watch for more information on future changes in early 2020.

General Assembly ended and Executive Board met at 9:15 AM. Greg K shared with us that several of the questions our group had on the question – answer sheet, were addressed and answers will be submitted in January.

Texas Extension Specialists Association

Treasurer and Membership Report: 12/2/2019

Account Balances - As o 12/2/2019

Account	Balance	Maturity	Rate
TESA-I4 Certificate of Deposit	\$ 3,746.14	2/17/2021	1.83%
TESA-I4.1 Certificate of Deposit	\$ 3,747.34	2/19/2020	1.49%
TESA-I4.2 Certificate of Deposit	\$ 3,749.77	8/18/2020	2.08%
TESA-S1 Savings	\$ 726.70		0.05%
TESA-S8 Checking	\$ 12,489.49		0.05%
TEEFI Account #2500 (thru 10/31/2019, dated	\$ 7,260.87	Account used to collect credit card payments (5% fee)	
Total	\$ 31,720.31		

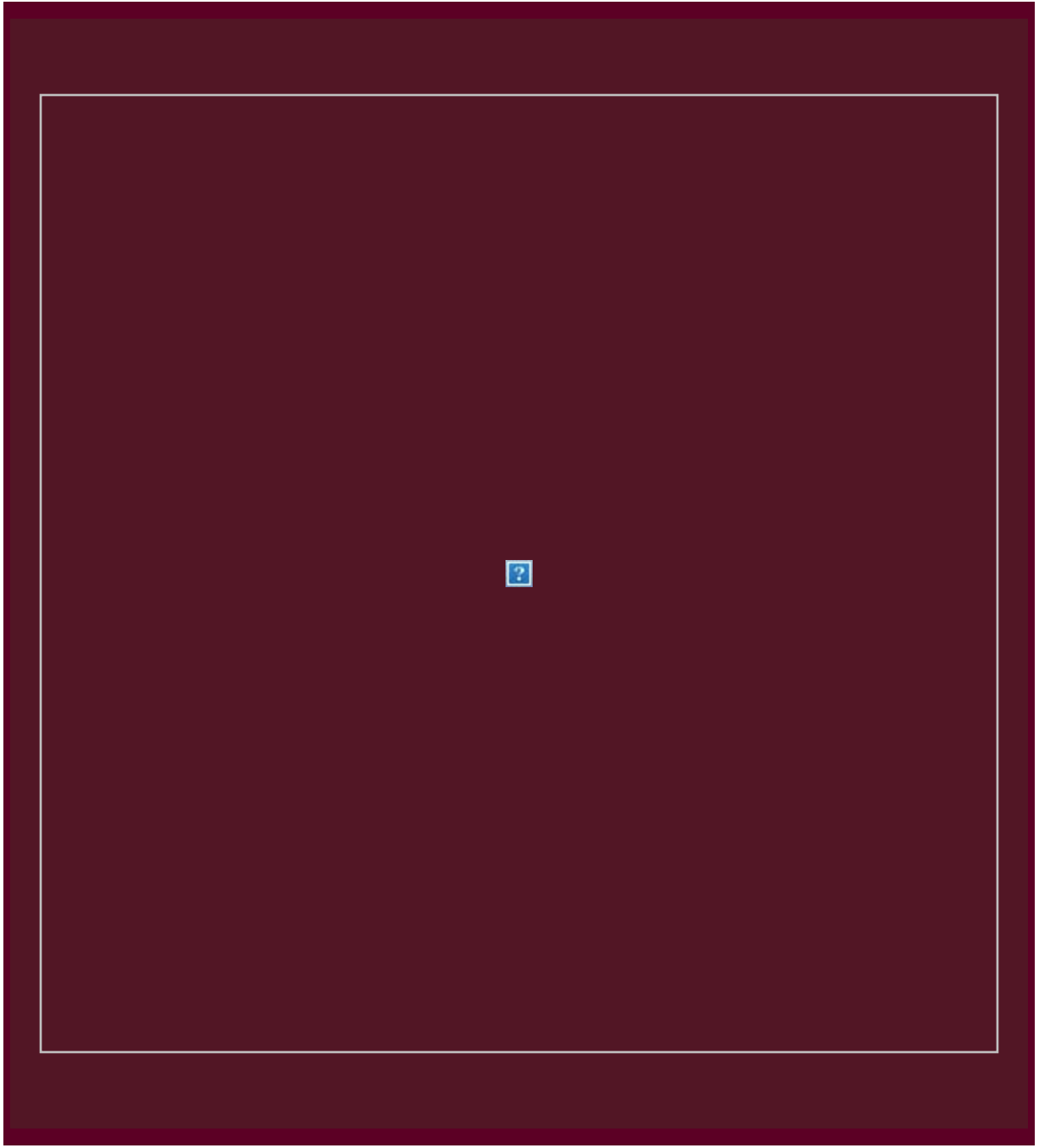
Income/Expense by Category -2014 through 12/2/2019

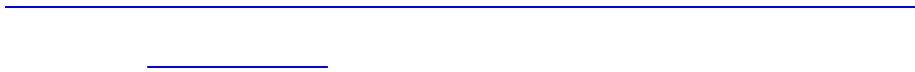
INCOME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Year to Date 18-19 combined	Proposed 2020	
								Approved 2019 Budget	Budget
01 - Ag Conf Social Registration	\$0.00	\$110.00	\$170.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$250.00	\$0.00 Haven't had since 2017
02 - Annual Meeting Registration	\$2,631.25	\$3,020.50	\$2,890.00	\$3,035.00	\$2,835.00	\$1,870.00		\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
03 - Membership Dues	\$1,065.00	\$1,145.00	\$900.00	\$980.00	\$960.00	\$600.00		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
04 - Sponsor Donations	\$13,150.00	\$11,400.00	\$10,650.00	\$11,950.00	\$11,350.00	10,950.00		\$11,500.00	\$11,500.00
05 - Interest	\$33.08	\$31.68	\$31.25	\$30.58	\$57.03	\$116.41		\$50.00	\$50.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$16,879.33	\$15,707.18	\$14,641.25	\$15,995.58	\$15,202.03	\$13,536.41	\$28,738.44	\$15,300.00	\$15,050.00
EXPENSES									
01 - Ag Conf Social	\$0.00	\$545.17	\$667.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$650.00	\$0.00 Haven't had since 2017
02 - Annual Meeting Costs	\$9,042.50	\$10,139.50	\$6,133.62	\$9,463.98	\$9,515.44	\$1,199.73		\$2,500.00	\$9,500.00 Back in line with past years
Annual Meeting Cost - 2019 Cruise Deposit									
03 - Board Expense	\$3,450.64	\$2,614.85	\$1,742.68	\$2,850.06	\$2,042.90	\$1,781.75		\$2,600.00	\$2,400.00 Balancing budget
04 - Chapter Meeting				\$49.60	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$500.00	\$100.00 Unused; Balancing budget
05 - Professional Development	-\$1,437.00	\$1,495.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$5,000.00	Haven't used \$5K
05a - Prof. Dev. Meeting/Travel Grant				\$889.86	\$0.00	\$2,456.38			
06 - Awards - Recognitions	\$182.11	\$277.38	\$233.75	\$275.00	\$821.60	\$503.75		\$700.00	\$500.00 Back in line with past years
07 - Scholarships	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
08 - Support	\$447.68	\$905.43	\$144.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$550.00	\$0.00 Unused; Balancing budget
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,685.93	\$16,977.33	\$9,921.80	\$16,089.04	\$25,569.40	\$6,441.61	\$32,011.01	\$13,500.00	\$15,000.00
OVERALL TOTAL	\$5,193.40	-\$1,270.15	\$4,719.45	-\$93.46	-\$10,367.37	\$7,094.80	-\$3,272.57	\$1,800.00	\$50.00

Membership Totals -2014 through 12/2/2019

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Paid Members	55	55	47	43	45	30	
Complimentary First Year Memb	10	10	27	8	10	14	3
Paid + Complimentary	65	65	74	51	55	44	3
Lifetime Members	126	125	123	122	119	116	116
Total	191	190	197	173	174	160	119

From: [Rosemary Schoenfeld](#) on behalf of [Jeff Hyde](#)
Subject: Director's Message - December 18, 2019
Date: Wednesday, December 18, 2019 10:18:08 AM





December 18, 2019

Meet Angela Burkham, Executive Associate Director



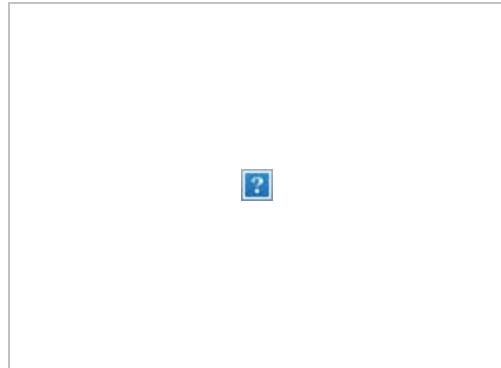
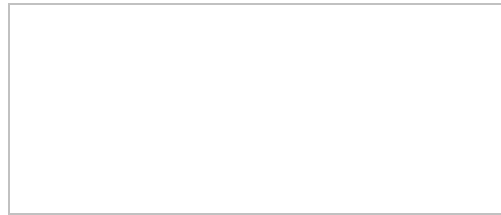


In this video, meet Angela Burkham, Ph.D., executive associate director. Burkham discusses her leadership role with the agency as well as a look ahead as to how AgriLife Extension serves Texas in the future.

Walk Across Texas Results

A research study evaluating the Walk Across Texas program was recently published in the journal,

BMC Public Health: “[Evaluation of Walk Across Texas! – A Web-based Community Physical Activity Program](#),” published in the refereed journal *BMC Public Health*. It’s the first time in the 20-year history of the program that it has been evaluated and published in a peer review journal. The purpose of the study was preliminary evaluation on an established team-centered, web-based community physical activity program in Texas.



[View journal article](#)

Redmon named ASA Fellow

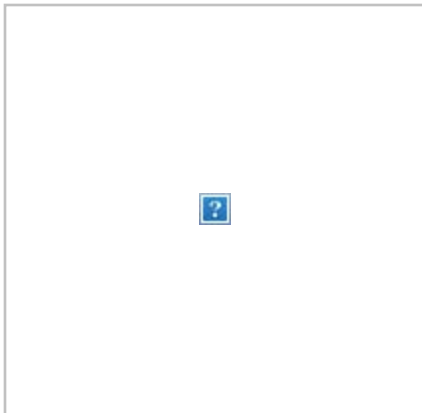
The American Society of Agronomy has named Larry Redmon, Ph.D., ASA Fellow. Redmon is the associate department head and AgriLife Extension program leader for the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M, administering one of the largest agronomic extension units in the country.

He also serves as the AgriLife



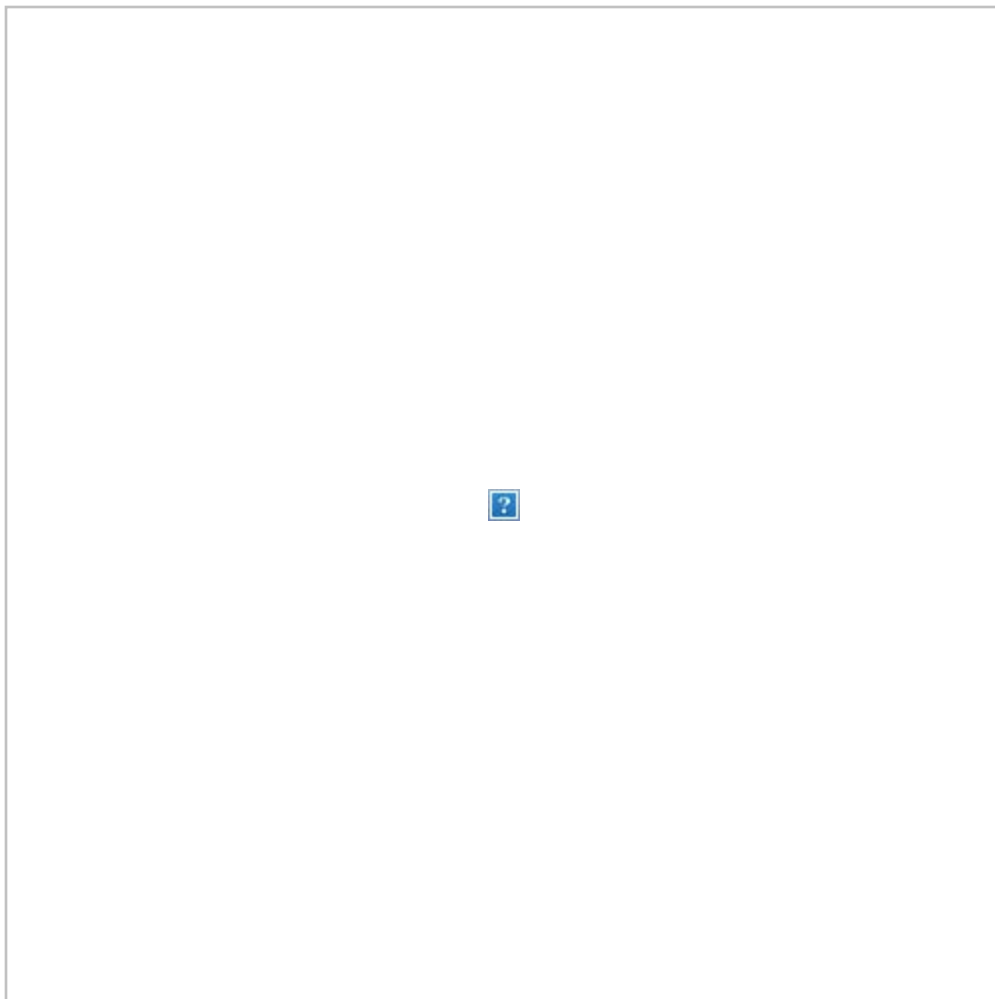
Extension state forage specialist, where he participates in educational programs across the state; and he serves as AgriLife Extension's first endowed specialist responsible for oversight of the Bennett Trust Endowment and associated land stewardship programs in the Edwards Plateau.

Outlaw honored by Texas Wheat Producers



Joe Outlaw, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist and co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M, has been named Wheat Man of the Year by the Texas Wheat Producers Board. Outlaw received the award from the association for many years of support providing analysis regarding farm policy, commodity outlook and other expertise.

AgriLife Extension programs assist military veterans



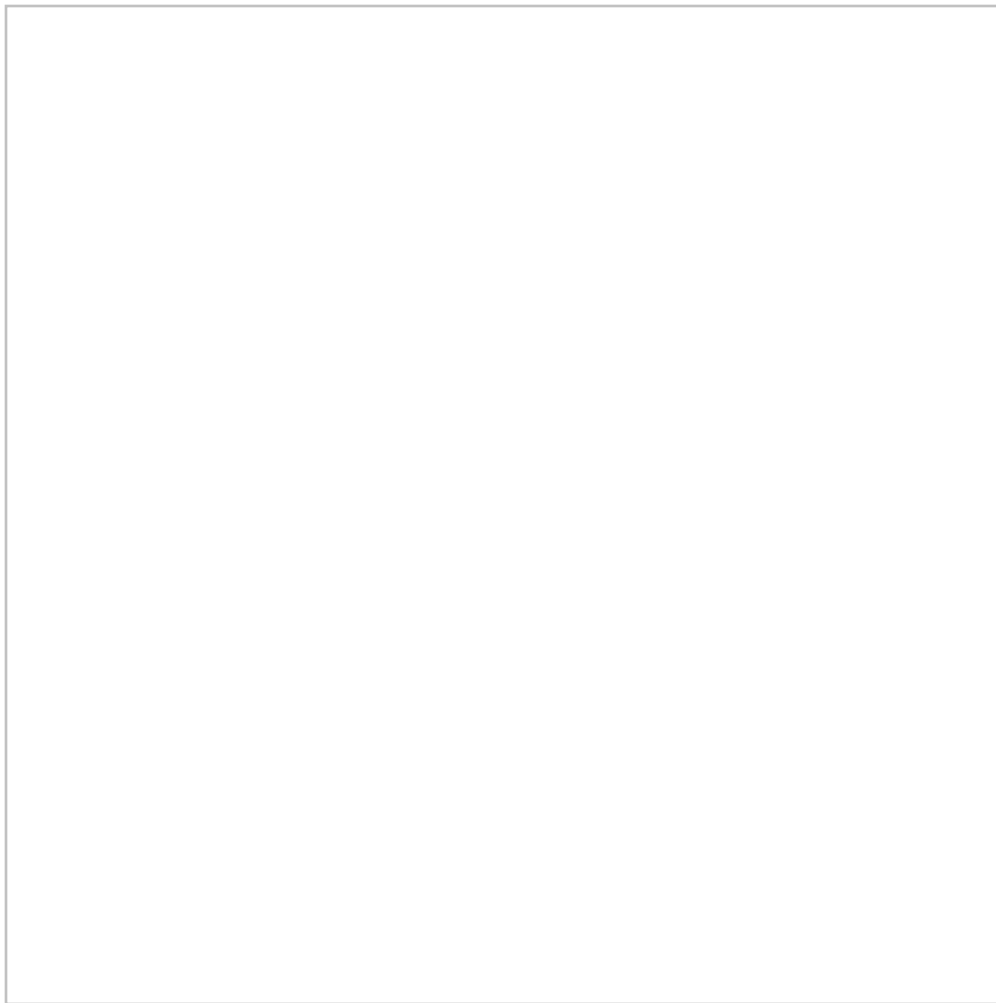
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs that assist military veterans in returning to agriculture or starting an agricultural enterprise operation were among those showcased during the recent Lone Star and Stripes Farmer Veteran Coalition Stakeholders Conference in Austin. The conference was touted as the fifth national event held by the coalition featuring two days of education, workshops, distinguished speakers, guest panels, networking and more. Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, a Navy veteran, was among the speakers at the conference, which was coordinated by the coalition and currently estimates its national membership at about 17,000.

The conference included 500 farmer veterans from throughout the U.S.

representing all branches of military service.

Southeast Texas Ag Summit

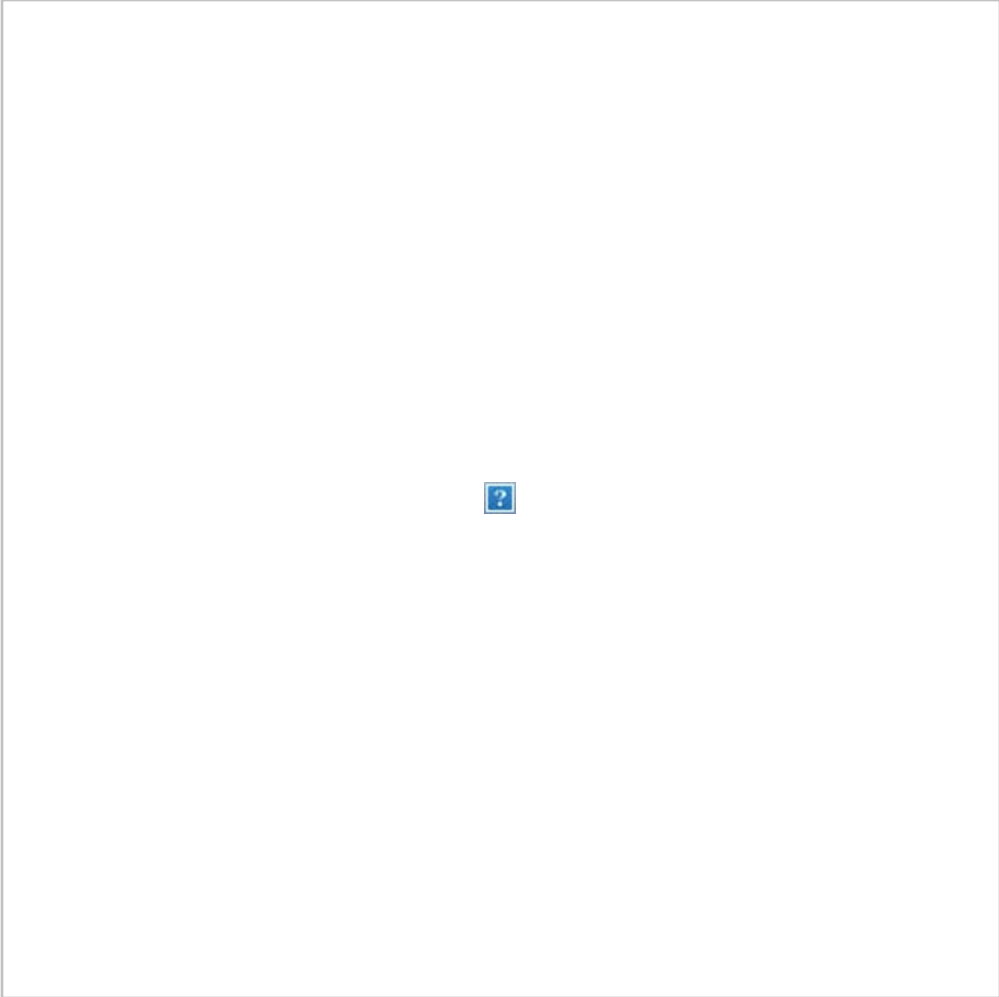
The first Southeast Texas Agriculture Summit was held December 12 at NRG Center in Houston. The event was co-hosted by AgriLife Extension and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The inaugural event had more than 150 attendees with topics focusing on farm policy, rice production and potential hemp production in Texas. The event will become an annual conference to showcase food and health in the region, giving consumers a better understanding of where their food comes from.



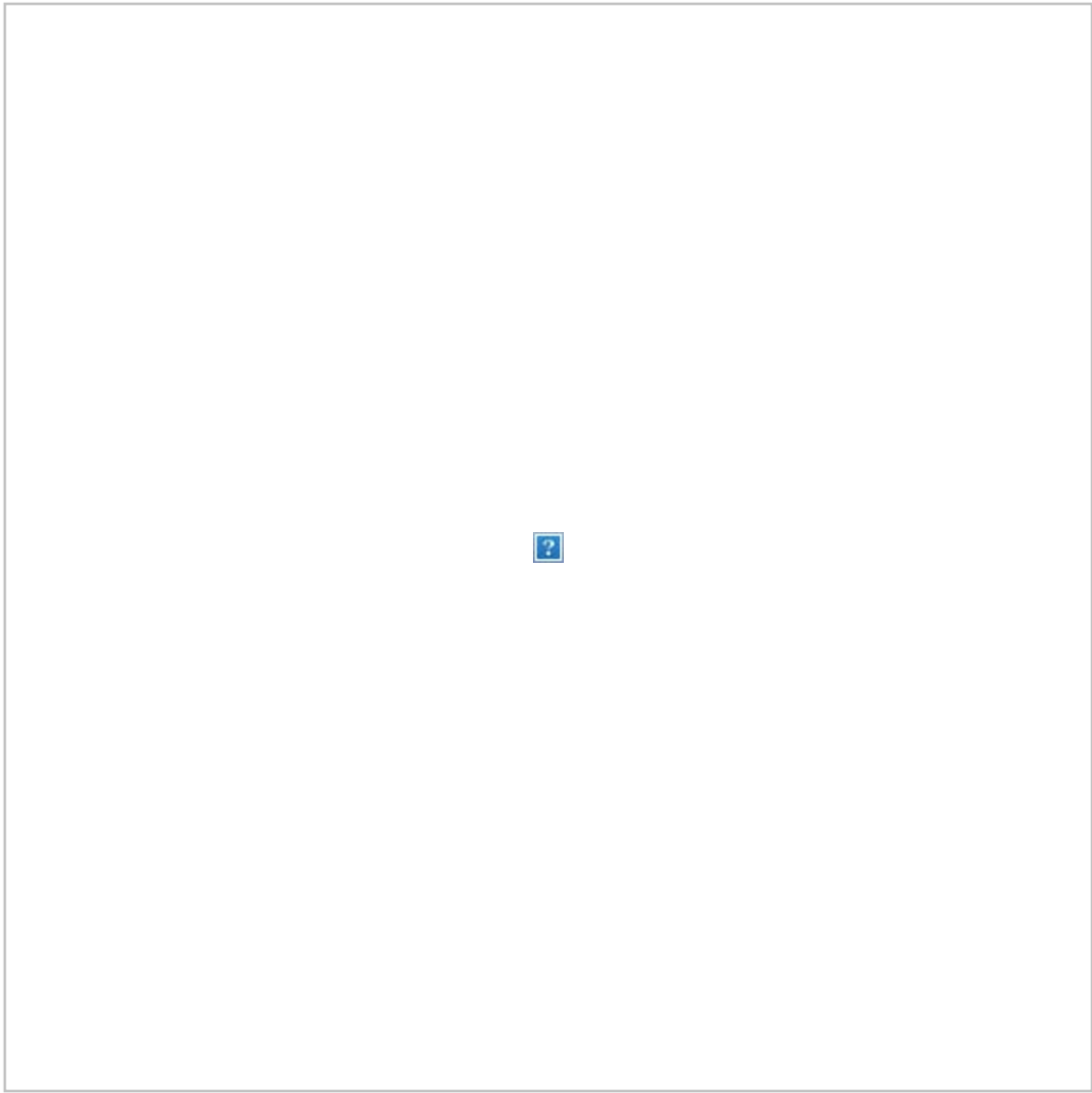
Pictured are (left) Elisa Donovan, Harris County Ag and Natural Resources Committee Chair; Tommy Turner, Texas Rice Council President; David Wright, Harris County Extension Director; Dan Hale, Ph.D., Associate Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

In the news...

Dinner Tonight was part of the annual Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show, garnering media coverage from local outlets. Click the video thumbnail to view a sampling of what was on display.



AgriLife Extension Personnel Updates



Click or tap the image or button to view a full list of personnel updates as a PDF.

[View Personnel Updates \(pdf\)](#)



Questions/Concerns/Answers for Administration (December 2019 Winter Boards)

A. Programming

1. Request online option for Auxin trainings (like private applicator training) that individuals can take on their own. Fee should be higher to encourage clientele to participate in local in-person trainings.

This training is required to be proctored. There will likely be an online course developed; but it would need to be taken in the presence of an agent or at the County Extension office.

2. Can an email be sent state-wide clarifying when to, and not to, charge PCR for auxin trainings? There still seems to be confusion about this.

An email can be sent. Since this is a required training a fee should be paid for taking the Auxin training. We will discuss the possibility of standardizing that fee.

3. Auxin training --- needs to be ready by January 1 and needs to be shorter in length.

The training is expected to be approved by December 1st and actually will be used for a training in mid-December. It should be ready by January 1st. The training will be 1 hour this year. Scott Nolte will work with Ag.

Communications to get the training deck made into a video to provide alternative means for their use in conducting group or individual activities.

4. Validation concerns ---- too many to address in this note

Need more specific information before we can respond.

5. How much of Distance Education will be resources for us to use and how much will be just classes we can send producers. Where will it be housed at? Will it build on local programs? Allow Local Online programs?

Digital learning will continue to be a shared service to the agencies, although Extension is the primary funder and user. The primary intent is for it to be used to provide educational programming to our audiences. Because it is a very limited resource, we plan to allocate the unit's time to broadly disseminated programs.

Program personnel should consider digital learning as an additional tool to reach audiences. When planning program objectives (i.e., what we want to be sure people learn), we should also think about how people want to learn that

thing and what will be effective. In this way, local programs and online programs should build on each other. If you have specific digital resources needs that would help address stakeholder educational efforts we would encourage that input.

6. CEU's – and TDA – the email from Dr. Renchie that came out about a month ago. Why is getting harder and harder to get CEU's approved – and why are they being approved by TDA for Specialists whereas CEA's are being told no from Renchie for programs that are basically the same topic offered by Specialists?

EPA has put in place new rules that TDA must adhere to as a result TDA is even more closely scrutinize the content educational activities offering CEU. This requires even greater diligence on the part of Extension to make sure that our educational activities meet the requirements for CEU courses. Specialists and Agents should be utilizing Don Renchie's office to assist in this process. Possibly one reason Specialists appear to have an advantage is they tend to work more closely with his office in the planning of an activity.

Extension has had a growing number of issues across the state with courses that offer CEU's, which do not have the appropriate content. This has caused an even greater scrutinizing of our programs with TDA. If you are not including significant amounts of the appropriate content do not offer CEU credits. Don's office wants to help all Extension personnel in this process.

7. Classroom 21st Century: From Dromgoole. What is this? Need to understand how this is going to work. How are we going to handle this?

If this is pertaining to the Collegiate Edu-Nation (CEN) Model, Dr. Dromgoole and Dr. Kim Alexander are working together on this project. As school districts express interest in adopting the CEN model, meetings have been set up with agents, DEAs, RPLs and 4-H Specialists to discuss the program and support the school in implementation, especially as it relates to 4-H integration in the schools.

8. Could we be provided with more information or a 1 pager on where the PCR funds are allocated? An accountability info sheet?

Fee based program funds (previously called Partial Cost Recovery) conducted by the agency are used for such things as professional development travel, conference registration fees, mileage, faculty rentals, telecommunications, utilities, janitorial, maintenance, copiers, supplies, computers, software and operating. A document could be considered, but more information is needed regarding its intended use.

9. Update on new version of 4-H Connect.

A new version of 4-H CONNECT was launched for the 2019-2020 4-H year. Some states went ahead and started using it; however, Texas did not. Last year at the annual conference for 4-H CONNECT, the programmer had no information to share or showcase regarding the new system. This did not allow us to be able to make a decision on whether or not to adopt it, and there would not have been adequate time to train 4-H Specialists and agents on using the system. Based upon this, Texas opted to wait another year before adopting. There is an annual conference in February 2020, at which time we are hoping to be able to actually see and learn more about the system. From there, a decision will be made on its use.

10. Texas Reporting System- Why can we roll-over our 4-H Plans but not our other plans?

For clarification the 4-H Grows, Youth ANR and Youth FCH plans were rolled over for each county this past year. The decision was made for only outreach plans that may be intensive in the number of tasks contained in the plan. The plans chosen were based on a calendar or routinely based approach to program development. There is not a plan to roll over indepth plans as they require an annual review and that each step of the program development process is incorporated.

11. What is the role of the Specialist versus the Regional Program Leader versus the Agent in the program planning and implementation processes? How should they work together, but also what should each have their focus/priority on?

Regional Program Leaders are the conduit which support the program planning interaction between agents and specialists. They also help the entire Extension team identify programming needs. As we develop the strategic plan over the coming year, we will look at the program planning process and required tools to assist the planning, coordination, and implementation process. Every person within the Extension team will be asked for input into the strategic plan and specifically the program planning process.

12. Is there any plan for updated evaluations for Family and Community Health and Path to the Plate programs? Specifically, are we identifying ways to make them more concise and easier for low-literacy populations to comprehend?

Path to the Plate program evaluation-we will be developing and uploading evaluation instruments to the Agent PTTP site in the next couple of months. These plans should span the disciplines within our Extension team.

We have developed and uploaded videos to help extension personnel and volunteers with this effort. These can be found at the Agent PTTP resource site. We encourage ideas on how we can do a better job of reaching this audience and would like help in identify the most appropriate resources that would help in this effort.

13. Do we know of any plans to tie SNAP benefits directly to Better Living for Texans programming?

I am not sure if the inquiry is based on economic impacts such as ROI of personnel and resources; those served by BLT programs and the food resource management – stretching their food dollars each month, which is taught in some of the BLT program series; or accessibility of BLT participants in both urban and rural locations to sign-up for and use SNAP benefits. For each of these possible situations, none are required by USDA – FNS nor HHSC to track and report. However, there are a few scenarios that lend themselves to addressing this question...

- State Legislative Sessions – For the agency and reporting to State legislators, these are areas we have explored with Dean McCorkle and his team in the economics unit when creating the white papers for interpretation. However, sometimes it is difficult to put a dollar amount on these factors. One way to address this is asking on surveys how much adult participants receive in SNAP benefit per month (if they receive the benefits) and estimate how much they spend on groceries each month.**
- As for the ROI, one of the annual FNS reports is being revised and Renda Nelson is serving on an FNS committee that is looking at the dosage/exposure of an intervention/program/series for behavior change. During the conversation, someone at the national level stated as the varied cost of living and other economic factors across the nation differ, writing a formula for ROI would not be advantageous. Thus, that has been a struggle within the SNAP-Ed program to put a dollar value on the time and effort of people implementing the program, cost of operating and travel expenses, and possibly the return on participant impacts with decreased missed work days due to sick leave of self or children, quality of life, etc. Thus, at this time there is not best practice in place for this in the SNAP-Ed program.**
- As a SNAP-Ed Implementing Agency with HHSC, we are required to include on printed materials the website link, www.yourtexasbenefits.com, and can encourage participants to sign-up if asked about the program. However, for the FNS side, SNAP-Ed program are not allowed to market any specific program that may support distribution or access to SNAP benefits...only point them to the Your Texas Benefits website.**

14. At the NEAFCS Annual Session, we learned many states are involved with the Center for Disease Control programming “Division of Diabetes.” Do we have any plans to be involved in this or other programming at the National level?

I am assuming this question may be referencing the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) that was featured at the NEAFCS Conference in Hershey, PA. If not, then more clarification on this question may be needed. In visiting with Program Leaders, it appears we do not have too much knowledge of this program. However, we can definitely investigate in order to learn more and see if it is something Texas would be interested in delivering.

15. In the Cooking Well with Diabetes program, what accommodation(s) could be done for Type 1 diabetics? This program is focused on Type II.

People with Type I diabetes should strive to make healthy food choices, control cholesterol and blood pressure, and incorporate physical activity into their daily routine similar to somebody with Type II diabetes. Type I diabetes differs in that the person does not produce insulin which requires insulin injections and specific eating patterns unique to their individual needs and physical activity habits. This will be prescribed by their healthcare provider.

Cooking Well with Diabetes educates on the application of healthy food choices through food preparation at home which can fit the person with diabetes. As always, it is not the CEA’s role to provide specific dietary recommendations. Agents should tell participants the information in Cooking Well with Diabetes is general information applicable for a person with diabetes and participants should always follow their healthcare provider recommendations for meeting their specific individual needs.

B. Agency

16. What is the vision for extension (strategic plan) under new leadership?

Extension will continue to work to provide programs that have a positive impact on every Texan. The charge received from the Vice Chancellor is to create a sustainable business model so that we can do that indefinitely. The strategic plan will focus primarily on how we provide programs. That is, it will inform our continued approach to digital learning, recruiting and retaining employees, and other key aspects of program delivery.

17. Is the new director planning on making trips to visit counties?

One of my priorities is to meet people (internal and external) to understand the agency and its work. Between that and requests for my time, the schedule is hectic. I am getting out as much as possible with a focus on opportunities that provide a chance to meet many people in the same trip. I am receiving briefings from many groups, program areas, and departments. I have been to three research and extension centers to date and am planning to visit others over the coming months.

18. Why would Administrative Team not meet with the association's one on one if they want to increase communications with association members and employees?

An adaption was made in the association meeting schedule for December 2019. The goal was to optimize the time spent with administration. In addition, administration is proposing adding two additional meetings with association officers to increase communication throughout the year, not just concentrated twice a year at Board meetings.

19. New Organizational Chart – we would like to have the positions better defined as to what their roles/duties are. Some CEA's asked where they fit in the chart as the CEA positions are not listed.

The initial organizational chart released the first of September reflected only the administrative changes being made. As reporting lines for Extension agents have not changed they were not noted. The revised chart currently on the agency website reflects the program delivery network.

<https://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/AgriLife-Extension-Organizational-Chart-2019-11-22.pdf>

20. Question was posed - "How do we answer a legislator that asks us in a nonprofessional setting (i.e. church) how AgriLife faired in the budget for this cycle?" Would an interpretative piece from Admin after the budget comes out be of assistance?

It would be most important to know the context in which an elected official may be asking the question. It is always appropriate to express our appreciation for elected officials support of our agency.

21. After watching attached video of Montza Williams (interview). Agents would like an explanation why production agriculture programming is not important to producers in our counties. Is this the direction we are going? *"I don't think there is a need for us to be in corn production business anymore. Farmers are aware of the technology"*

This statement does not imply or demonstrate a lack of value of Extension's agriculture programming. Instead, and what was meant to Dr. Williams, is a recognition of where the 4-H program started with the establishment of boys' corn clubs. Over the past 110+ years, the program has progressed to where we are today by addressing the current issues facing youth. We must continue to look for the emerging and relevant issues that are impacting youth and use them as a basis for programs in order to most effectively meet their needs today and into the future.

22. With the changes made recently to the Ag Communications unit, is there a flow chart or work-related chart about who to contact for help with publications, online course work, marketing documents, web management support, etc. Is the Ag Communication unit also the place where a specialist or agent would go if they needed help or information with web design, graphics, etc.

Ag Communications continues to assist specialists, agents with web design, graphics and promotional work on programs and educational delivery. For projects and for the unit to properly track and manage requests, complete a Work Request form by selecting the appropriate request (Promo/Graphics, Websites, Educational Publishing) available at <https://communications.agrilife.org/>. Please note: The Copy Services division will cease operation January 15th. The last day to submit requests is November 29th. The Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service will handle all print/copy orders thereafter and an account will have to be established by visiting:

<https://myteexprint.myprintdesk.net/DSF/SmartStore.aspx?6xni2of2cF1x9s/YqAHX3MsbDgOO7814fYLO0rYzWMqwXVTrHs4giE3RYNFzaZ1G#!/Storefront>

For story/press release requests for AgriLife Today, please submit those at <https://communications.agrilife.org/story-suggestion/>.

Agents/specialists can also contact the following Communications Specialists statewide for assistance:

- a. Kay Ledbetter, Amarillo (Panhandle, Plains)
- b. Adam Russell, Overton (East Texas region)
- c. Laura Muntean, College Station (Southeast Central Texas, Gulf Coast)
- d. Paul Schattenberg, San Antonio (South Texas)
- e. Susan Himes, San Angelo (West Region)
- f. For general inquiries related to Extension Communications, Blair Fannin, Associate Director for Communications.

The Ag Communications Unit is led by Holly Shive, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing. Associate Directors are Katie Hancock (Strategic/Creative Communications), John Chivvis (AgriLife Research,

COALS) and Blair Fannin (Extension). Currently, coordinators include Kim Topp (graphic design); Travis Ward (web), Caitlyn Calvert (D2L online), Leslie Provazek (bookstore).

C. Personnel/Salary

23. Is there a set rubric or criteria that are looked at when determining Pay Increases or Merit Raises?

For County Extension Agents, each individual is provided with a rating within their District and further within each Subject Matter/Title. CEA-FCH for example are rated following performance appraisal, based on last year's performance. The ratings are as follows - "1" for the upper 25% of performers, "2" for the next 50% of performers, "3" for the lower 25% of performers. For any agent who is on a Performance Improvement Plan, a rating of "6" is assigned and they are not eligible for merit increases. For those with less than 9 months in the previous year in a position, a rating of "9" is assigned and they are not eligible for increases.

Once all ratings have been assigned, a DEA assigns a merit increase (based on available funding) to those rated "1" or "2", within a range provided by Administration. A very limited number of Agents rated "3" may receive a smaller increase if warranted.

In general pay increases are determined annually based on TAMUS guidance and available resources.

24. Where are we at addressing compression? Mid-career+ agents have yet to see marked pay increases.

We have continued to address through merit increases for those who are rated in the upper end of the District within their title grouping. There have not been additional funds appropriated in support of salary increases as of today.

25. 4-H Summit and Round-up: Why are agents required to pay while working at Texas 4-H Roundup? There are concerns about high registration cost of 4-H Summit, which was required for many agents regardless if their travel budget could support such an expensive training.

There is a cost associated with all programs conducted. At Texas 4-H Roundup, we pay for every person that walks into a 4-H Roundup event. Costs include facility usage, insurance, university fees, as well as programming fees and supplies. Therefore, a registration fee must be assessed for all

participants. We continue to work closely with the Texas 4-H Foundation to acquire funding to support programs, including Texas 4-H Roundup.

The 4-H Conference Center is also operated as a business with an expectation that they generate funds to support their operation. This is a great place to provide internal professional development opportunities, such as the 4-H Summit. With that, like many other professional development opportunities, come a cost. The registration fee charged for the 4-H Summit included programming fees and facility usage, as well as meals and lodging. Registration fees were \$200 for the dorm, \$225 for double occupancy in the lodge, and \$130 for no lodging. The 4-H Program did contribute funds to keep the price lower for agents to attend.

Example: 2019 TAE4-HA Conference Expenses

- **Conference Registration: \$175**
- **Hotel: \$126.40 per night (with taxes) for 3 nights \$379.20; double occupancy rate would be: \$189.60**
- **3 days meals at per diem rate of \$56 per day: \$168**
- **Total costs, double occupancy, not including travel expenses: \$532.60**

26. Why are mandatory trainings scheduled in front, on top of, or right after major show entries are due? Primary example is 4-H Summit.

We realize that the fall is busy with major show entries and validation. The 4-H Summit has traditionally been held in November. We have hosted the 4-H Summit in October (2017), which lead to concerns that it conflicted with fall (heifer) validation. When we look at the program year and calendars, I think we would find every month of the year is busy with some type of program, whether it is a major livestock shows, county programming, district contests, program planning or summer events.

27. Need training and explanation of how our Workman's Comp works and what we need to do in the case that we are injured on the job.

There is no training per se, as it is a matter of the employee/HR Contact/Supervisor completing the online form in the new Origami software when an employee is injured. A great resource is our Human Resources: Workers' Compensation webpage at <https://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/hr/workers-compensation/>.

Texas A&M AgriLife is required to submit employee worked related injuries through the Origami Software. A reference guide to use while completing the online report can be provided. The information in the first report of injury will need to be submitted through the link below:

<https://live.origamirisk.com/Origami/IncidentEntry/Direct?token=moTn1T4gmzSucpRjPWLISBIYhna%2BEZfM8DJcYKUZjA2fxYtWZsSEGmSPadR8JS0FXS31Twf1BKpDooWOu6c7Dm9tu5hrx9uu7IW62wDslfElc5c7L1trKaB44vGNiWws>

There are supplemental forms for periods of time lost from work (more than the day of the injury), and each the district or unit should be contacted.

28. Request to make sure RPL/DEAs are held to the same expectation as agents as far as getting dates and information out more than a few days/weeks before a training or program. They are not held to the same expectation to plan out a year or more in advance and want to add things to agent calendars with very little notice.

As far as District Administrative meetings are concerned, DEAs are providing those dates to Administration in the fall of the year prior to said meetings. There could be some instances where a training need emerges due to an unforeseen issue, however we will encourage Regional Teams to be more diligent in planning and providing dates well in advance.

Often issues come up that we must react to provide the appropriate response to our stakeholders. To be fair with Regional Teams, they often are reacting to quick response requests from upper administration and we put them in a difficult position of asking members of the Extension team to in turn react with short notice. We need to be mindful of this situation, unfortunately it may be beyond our control. We will address this concern with the RPL/DEA's. In our strategic plan we will be looking extensively at program planning and coordination. We will look at digital tools to help us in this process.

Industrial Hemp is an example of an issue that needed to be address quickly by all levels within the Extension team.

29. Can career ladder use years as service as an equivalent to master's degree? Example, agents with 15 years of service but only a bachelor's degree cannot go beyond level II under current system.

The guidelines have been clear that CEAs with less than a master's degree cannot progress past a Level II on the CEA Career Ladder. Since master's degrees are no longer required but encouraged this has been a tool to help encourage Agents to obtain an advanced degree.

30. There are instances when agent is rehired by Extension (previously worked as agent, left, rehired as agent) and then paid a higher salary than agents that have never left Extension. Gives the impression that loyalty means little.

With every external hire into Extension, the selected candidate is offered a salary that has been determined based on the ER (Equivalently Ratio) time, the education level, the county size, and the proposed career ladder level. All new hires are compared to their peers with similar criteria in the categories listed and are hired to maintain equity across the state. If an Agent returns to Extension at a higher salary than they left, it is simply due to the increased ER time and possibly any increases that have happened in general salaries since the agent left.

31. In some regions, there continues to be some disconnect in the understanding of the roles of the RPL's. Maybe there is some potential here to reinforce the vision for the RPL/specialist relationship. (This was the concern we received, but we understand this isn't necessarily a statewide concern.)

We hope that the new administration structure (organizational chart) will help better connect the RPL/Specialists interactions. It is our desire to foster a team attitude among the entire Extension team. Regional Program Leaders are the conduit which support the program planning interaction between agents and specialists. They also help the entire Extension team identify programming needs. As we develop the strategic plan over the coming year, we will look at the program planning process and required tools to assist the planning, coordination, and implementation process. Every person within the Extension team will be asked for input into the strategic plan and specifically the program planning process.

D. Disaster & Recovery

32. Agents are aware of the \$6.8 million-dollar exceptional item request being funded and are interested in more details on how those funds are being spent. Outside of the DAR agents and specialists, support for county administrators/county coordinators/STRIKE Team members where are the funds being spent. More assistant agents? Salary enhancements?

In addition to salaries for the EA-DAR agents and Program Specialists/Specialists with DAR responsibility and salary support for RPLS, DEAs, County Coordinators, and CEAs serving on Strike Teams, the \$3.4 mil (\$6.8 mil for the biennium) will be used for travel and operational expenses associated with carrying out the programming work of the DAR Unit. It should be noted that the flexibility afforded us due to the additional funds allowed

Extension to offer a full 2% add to base merit in 2019, rather than a split add to base and one-time merit as in previous years.

33. **DAR Job Description – how does it impact CEAs in all counties (hosting, adjacent, participating, non-participating)? Want to know more about how this all looks before it is rolled out.**

CEAs who serve as the county coordinator will be expected to serve, in a disaster as the recovery liaison for the county commissioners court, city mayors, and school superintendents in their respective counties. This was the process that CEAs successfully demonstrated AgriLife Extension's capacity to be the eyes and ears of local elected officials given our presence in every county across Texas, the highly valued relationship of CEAs and their county commissioners court, and the local knowledge and investment each county agent has of the county and communities they serve. Of course, accommodations will be provided for local Extension agents that have been personally impacted by an event. In addition, plans are to continue to deploy all hazard strike team members to support animal supply points, animal sheltering operations and animal recovery operations following our set rotation of 5 to 6 days in the impact zone to support animal response operations. EA-DAR agents will be deployed as well and will serve extended tours in the impact zone to provide ongoing continuity of services to strike teams as they rotate in and out. This will also provide a more consistent recovery effort for the locally impacted Extension staff. All CEA agents may be asked to support local jurisdictions and the Texas Division of Emergency Management with recovery efforts associated with the FEMA Public Assistance Program. This program forms the basis of securing federal disaster recovery dollars for federally declared disaster events to aid in putting communities and counties back whole. Just as our CEAs in Southeast Texas did following Tropical Storm Imelda, all Extension agents may be asked to support local jurisdictions in completing windshield surveys for county judges and mayors to use in completing disaster summary outlines, preliminary damage assessments to determine extent of damage to jurisdictions/related entity infrastructure or equipment, submission of request for public assistance and supporting documentation to the FEMA Grants portal, and final site inspections to completed Public Assistance Program projects. All of this is designed to help the Texas Division of Emergency Management expedite the process jurisdictions must follow to secure FEMA Public Assistance Program reimbursement. Such efforts should speed the recovery process by enhancing the flow of recovery dollars back into the impacted counties. Of course, Extension Agents – DAR will be made ready to deploy for extended periods of time to help with such recovery work. We anticipate members of the All Hazards Strike Teams could be deployed as well (on the standard 5 to 6 day rotation) to support these recovery operations. The Extension Agents – DAR will also be expected to support local County Extension disaster preparedness and resiliency educational programs and

demonstrations in each of the counties they serve. It is also anticipated the Extension Agents – DAR will assist each county they serve with determining the status of animal issues committees and subsequent plans and the existence (or formation) of community organizations assisting in disasters (COADs) or long-term recovery committees. As this new Extension Disaster Response and Recovery program is rolled out, it should be emphasized that duties and responsibilities of all Extension staff may change over time and as needs warrant.

34. Emergency Management Full Plan – what are we doing? Communication from administration is lacking on the full picture plan for our role in emergency management. Will DAR Agents be expected/asked to participate in some of the regional disaster exercises hosted by other agencies?

Yes, Extension Agents – Disaster Assessment and Recovery agents will be expected to participate in appropriate local and regional response and recovery exercises to ensure AgriLife Extension Services' ability to respond when called upon. In addition, plans are for all Extension Agent – DAR be trained to serve as a safety officer during a deployment of an all hazards strike team (as needed).

35. Concern – some agents in counties where a DAR agent is to be housed didn't find out about the positions until it came from their Emergency Management Coordinator or County Judge. Where was the communication?

Such designations are at the discretion of the District Extension Director to enhance the success of the DAR program. Several of the open positions are still undetermined and will be based upon the location of a suitable candidate. So long as the candidate can serve the Districts/Area they are assigned, we will be flexible on office location and will work with Agents to locate space based on identified candidate.