

Sustaining Agricultural Production THROUGH EDUCATION



Challenges

- Livestock and poultry producers face serious threats from pervasive and invasive animal diseases such as bird influenza, Rift Valley fever, West Nile virus and tick-borne diseases.
- Changing global markets and managing agricultural production and price risk have farmers and ranchers seeking ways to maximize production efficiency to maintain competitiveness.
- Issues regarding Texas' water supply and demand balance have brought about the need for more efficient use of this vital resource.
- Rising input costs and various production-related challenges, including droughts, invasive species and other pests, have placed serious stress on farmers and ranchers across the state.

AgriLife Extension Response

In agriculture, AgriLife Extension delivers wide-ranging educational programs focused on research-based production and management practices, evaluation of technologies, improved decision-making, water-use efficiency and job training. AgriLife Extension is at the forefront in responding to emerging issues such as drought, wildfires, and insect and disease outbreaks.

- **Crop production** programs cover variety testing, irrigation efficiency, disease, pest management and control, commodity marketing, financial risk management and farm bill education.
- **Livestock production** programs focus on improved reproduction strategies, animal health, feeds and nutrition, forage production, breeding stock replacement strategies and livestock marketing.
- Through **13,700 educational events**, planning meetings and workshops in 2023, AgriLife Extension achieved more than **5.2 million** educational and other contacts.
- AgriLife Extension often collaborates with industry groups and other government entities to deliver educational programs.

Economic Impacts

Selected programs are highlighted below, where impacts were measured by the increase in net returns associated with adoption of certain management practices taught in 2023.

- Livestock and dairy production programs resulted in an estimated economic gain of **\$87.9 million**, and crop and livestock-related financial risk management and business planning programs resulted in estimated gains of **\$32.2 million**.
- Outreach related to crops, floriculture and nursery production led to an estimated increase in annual net returns of **\$77.1 million** and assisted cotton growers with variety selection valued at **\$43.2 million**.
- The **boll weevil eradication** program had estimated benefits of **\$512 million**, with cumulative benefits of **\$6 billion** since 1996.
- These crop and livestock-related impacts supported an additional **8,126 jobs** in agribusiness and retail sectors.
- **453,000 farm units** were analyzed using the web-based decision aid for the 2018 Farm Bill, developed by the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC), with an estimated impact of improved decision-making valued at **\$1.06 billion**.
- Provided required job training and continuing education related to pesticide safety, cotton ginning and beef cattle handling for 64,978 business owners and employees, with an annual wage base of **\$1.2 billion**.

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