

FCH Monthly Newsletter

January 2026

Howdy!

Hi everyone — Sarah here!

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season filled with rest, joy, and time spent with those who matter most. As we step into a brand-new year, I'm excited to see what the new year brings in Kaufman County.

January kicks off with one of my favorite programs: Master of Memory. This free class is designed not only for individuals who want to sharpen their memory, but also for caregivers who support someone experiencing memory challenges.

I'm also excited to continue building strong community partnerships this year. We have a variety of topics and a wide range of programs lined up — everything from diabetes support resources all the way to pest control ideas. Each partnership event brings something unique, so be sure to check the flyers at the end of the newsletter each month for full details and upcoming opportunities.

I'm looking forward to a year filled with learning, connection, and new ways to support you and your families. Thank you for continuing to welcome me into this wonderful community — and I hope to see many more of you at one of my upcoming programs!

Warm regards,
Sarah Matranga
Family & Community Health Agent



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE



In this newsletter you can expect:

Gardening Tips & Tricks

Nutritional Recipes & Wellness Tips

Agents in Action!

Kaufman County Extension Upcoming Programs

Partnership Announcements

Gardening Tips

Planting in January



January is the time to plant cold-hardy transplants such as calendulas, dianthus, flowering kale, pansies and snapdragons. You can plant spring flowers and vegetables seeds indoors, or in a greenhouse conditions for later transplanting. Grow lights and heat will speed things along if you don't plant immediately in January. It may seem early, but some seedlings need lots of time to establish before being moved outside.

Start to fertilize your transplants around April. Apply a light application of slow release fertilizer to cool season annuals. Cotton seed, alfalfa meal or commercial slow release fertilizer products can be used according to label instructions. If you are looking for organic options, use an organic root stimulator or compost tea for new shrubs and trees until they are well established. Apply greensand and rock mineral's to any plants that appear yellow with green veins. Dried blood meal is an EXCELLENT source of fertilizer for pansies and for the last leg of your cool season annuals.



Keep your plants pruned. Remove all vines and groundcovers away from the root flare of trees. Prune shade trees and shrubs by removing damage and dead limbs. Remove water sprouts or crossing limbs. Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before spring.

Remember: warm season vegetables need between 6-8 hours of sunlight for max production!



Recipe of the Month

Slow Cooker Quinoa & Black Bean Stuffed Bell Peppers

Ingredients:

- 2 bell peppers (any color)
- 1/3 cup uncooked quinoa, rinsed
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce, no salt added
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 3/4 cup shredded low-fat cheese (divided)
- 1/4 cup yellow onion, diced
- Cilantro for garnish (optional)



Directions:

1. Wash hands, preparation area and vegetables.
2. Cut the tops off of the peppers and scrape out the ribs and seeds.
3. In a bowl, combine quinoa, beans, tomato sauce, spices, and 1/2 cup of the cheese. Fill each pepper with the mixture.
4. Pour 1/4 cup water into the bottom of a 1.5 quart slow cooker. Place the peppers in the water. Cover and cook on low for 4-5 hours, or on high for 2 hours.
5. Remove lid, distribute remaining cheese on top of peppers, and cover again until the cheese is melted. Serve. Add salt and pepper to taste.



*Note: This recipe uses a 1.5 quart slow cooker. If you have a larger slow cooker, try doubling the recipe and saving leftovers!

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
Serving size	1 stuffed pepper
Calories	490
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g	17%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 25mg	8%
Sodium 410mg	18%
Total Carbohydrate 67g	24%
Dietary Fiber 17g	61%
Total Sugars 10g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 29g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 642mg	50%
Iron 7mg	40%
Potassium 1336mg	30%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

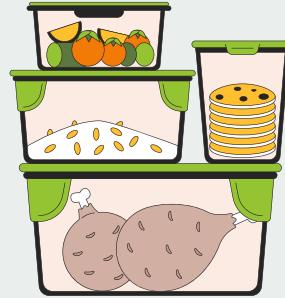
Wellness Tips

Making the New Year Change!



Take small steps.

Decide on one thing to change at a time. For example, if your goal is to eat more vegetables, choose which meal of the day and a vegetable you enjoy. As it becomes easier to do this over time, try adding in new vegetables one at a time and celebrate learning about new foods.



Prepare meals ahead.

Make it easy to have better food choices! Prepare and store meals ahead of time for those days when your schedule is busier. If some meals are difficult to prepare entirely in advance, think about the ingredients and steps involved and choose which parts to prep ahead of time.



Be flexible and stay encouraged.

Everyday life situations can sometimes make it hard to stay on track. Know they may happen and stay positive. This can also be an opportunity to reset and refocus on your goals. Take time to celebrate the small victories along the way.



Find practical ways to make healthier eating work for your schedule and lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle is a lifelong process, so keep it fun and enjoy the food you eat. Make the change FUN!

Agents in Action!



December is the month of giving, and that is exactly what 4-H Agent Carrie Sharp, FCH Agent Sarah Matranga, and a group of 4-H members demonstrated.

In November, Sarah applied for and received a Walmart Service Project grant through the Texas 4-H Foundation.

Through this grant, 15 children received Christmas gifts, allowing the group to give back to the local community.

Agents in Action!

On Saturday, December 6, 4-H Agent Carrie Sharp and FCH Agent Sarah Matranga set up a booth at Kaufman's Christmas on the Square to promote AgriLife Extension and provide resources to the community.



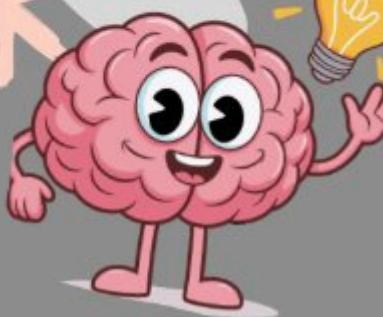
On Saturday December 13th, 4-H Agent Carrie Sharp, hosted her monthly Clover Kids Program. This session was full of cooking & crafts. From Salt Ornament making to Gingerbread House building. We had a BLAST!



January Local Programs

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

MASTER OF MEMORY



FREE PROGRAM

WEDNESDAYS IN 2026!
4:30-5:30 PM
IN PERSON AT KCO EXTENSION OFFICE
OR VIA ZOOM
CONTACT SARAH FOR LINK!
JANUARY 7, 14, 21 & 28
& FEBRUARY 4 & 18

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

SHARPEN YOUR MIND!
JOIN FCH AGENT SARAH MATRANGA
FOR A 6-WEEK MASTER OF MEMORY SERIES
& DISCOVER HOW MEMORY WORKS.
YOU'LL ALSO GET PRACTICAL TIPS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR
SKILLS OR SUPPORT THOSE YOU CARE ABOUT.

REGISTER BY PHONE OR EMAIL:

📞 469-376-4520
✉️ SARAH.MATRANGA@AG.TAMU.EDU
📍 2471 N STATE HWY 34
KAUFMAN 75142

TOPICS COVERED

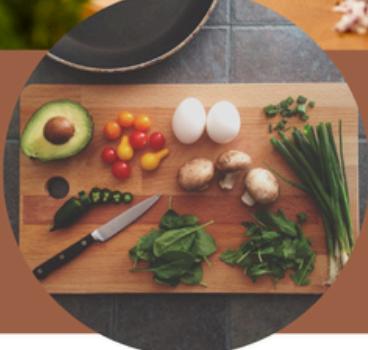
- MEMORY STRATEGIES
- NUTRITION
- MEDICATIONS
- MEDICAL CONDITIONS

THE MEMBERS OF TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE WILL PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT TO ALL PERSONS REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, SEX, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, DISABILITY, GENETIC INFORMATION, VETERAN STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, OR ANY OTHER CLASSIFICATION PROTECTED BY FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL LAW. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO REQUIRE AUXILIARY AID, SERVICE OR ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTENSION SPONSORED MEETINGS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT THE COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE AT 469-376-4520 AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO PROGRAM TO DETERMINE HOW REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS CAN BE MADE.

February Local Programs



COOKING WELL FOR HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE



***Free program offered
by Kaufman County**

A 3-lesson series designed to help individuals prevent and manage high blood pressure by educating on healthy eating and lifestyle changes.

- DASHing Your Way to Improved Health
- A Virtual Grocery Store Tour
- Cooking Well with Spices and Herbs

REGISTRATION DETAILS
2026 in Kaufman County
Tuesdays 5-6 PM

- February 24th
- March 3rd
- March 10th

Call or email to register:
469-376-4520
sarah.matranga@ag.tamu.edu
Location: KCo Extension Office
2471 N State Hwy 34, Kaufman

March Local Programs



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

COOKING WELL
WITH FRIENDS

Cooking Well with Friends Kaufman County March 2026

Cooking Well with Friends is a three-lesson cooking class that provides you with the knowledge and skills required to safely and effectively plan, prepare, freeze and cook healthy meals. This class is for busy families to make mealtime easier by preparing healthy meals to freeze and keep on hand.

Lesson 1 March 2- Everyday Balance Meals

Lesson 2 March 9- Meal Planning and Freezer Cooking

Lesson 3 March 16- Preparing your Freezer Meals

Where: KCo Extension Office, 2471 N State Hwy 34, Kaufman

Time: 5-6 PM

Registration Fee: \$20

The hands-on activities provide you the opportunity to make spice mixes and marinades, as well as two meals at each of the other weeks.

Space is limited, register quickly!

To register please call or email:

469-376-4520

sarah.matranga@ag.tamu.edu

FIND US ON FACEBOOK: Kaufman County Family & Community Health

FIND US ON YOUTUBE: @fchkaufmancounty

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law. Individuals with disabilities who require auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in Extension sponsored meetings are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at 469-376-4520 at least 2 weeks prior to program to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

March Local Programs



**PRESERVING
THE
HARVEST**

**Roll up your sleeves and learn to
Preserve the Harvest!**

**Join us for a fun, hands-on canning class
where you'll make your own batch of**

SALSA

using the water bath canning method.

**Learn safe food preservation techniques, get expert tips,
and take home a jar of your delicious creations!**

Date: March 28, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Cost: \$30/person (*adult participants only*)
Location: Kaufman County Extension Office
2471 N State Hwy 34, Kaufman
***Space is limited—register today:**
469-376-4520
sarah.matranga@ag.tamu.edu

Class Presented by:
Sarah Matranga, CEA FCH
Find us on facebook:
Kaufman County Family & Community Health

****Can't make it to this class? Don't
worry—another class will be offered
in June!****

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law. Individuals with disabilities who require auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in Extension sponsored meetings are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at 469-376-4520 at least 2 weeks prior to program to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

Upcoming Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Events

FREE EVENT

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

DOOR PRIZES

DON'T LET BUGS STEAL YOUR BLOOMS!

JOIN GUEST SPEAKER
SARAH MATRANGA, KAUFMAN CEA

LEARN HOW TO SPOT, TREAT, &
SAFELY ELIMINATE THE MOST
COMMON GARDEN PESTS & WEEDS
IN NORTHEAST TEXAS!

WHEN: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

TIME: 6:00 - 7:00 PM

LOCATION: BFTS MUSEUM
119 SILENT WINGS BLVD. IN TERRELL, TX

HOSTED BY:
WWW.BFTSMUSEUM.ORG

NO.1 BRITISH
FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL MUSEUM

SARAH E. MATRANGA, MS
SARAH.MATRANGA@AG.TAMU.EDU

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED BY:
TERRELL GARDEN CLUB

SHARED BY:

TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Kaufman County

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Upcoming Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Events



POTS OF POSSIBILITY: SPRING GARDENING MADE SIMPLE



6-week Container Gardening Series
Presented by Kaufman County FCH Agent: Sarah Matranga

Thursdays: 6-7:00pm
Cost: \$20 (cash/check)

February 26 - April 9, 2026
(SKIP WEEK → APRIL 2nd)
@TriCounty Library
130 E Market St, Mabank



Participants will gain basic vegetable gardening knowledge & take home their own container garden!

***MUST BE 13 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**
\$20 COVERS THE FULL 6-WEEK SERIES! PLEASE REGISTER
BY PHONE: 469-376-4520
OR EMAIL: SARAH.MATRANGA@AG.TAMU.EDU

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION
FAMILY &
COMMUNITY HEALTH

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Upcoming Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Events



*FREE PROGRAM! A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CONTAINER GARDEN

PARTICIPANTS WILL GAIN BASIC
VEGETABLE GARDENING KNOWLEDGE &
TAKE HOME THEIR
OWN CONTAINER GARDEN!

WHEN? WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026
WHERE? THE CENTER @
400 S TERRELL HWY, KAUFMAN
TIME? 11 AM-1 PM

SPACE IS LIMITED!

PROGRAM SPONSORED BY: THE CENTER
FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO REGISTER,
CONTACT THE CENTER @
(972) 932-8866
REGISTRATION CLOSES 3/18/26



JOIN KAUFMAN COUNTY
FCH AGENT SARAH MATRANGA
FOR A 2 HOUR CLASS



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

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Community Partner's Page

Diabetes Support Group

Cooking Well with Diabetes Diabetes Management 101

Sarah E. Matranga, MS

AgriLife County Extension Agent

**Saturday, January 10, 2026
10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Basement Conference Room A
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Kaufman
850 Ed Hall Drive, Kaufman

For more information, please contact
Anita Hurtado at 972-932-5252
anitahurtado@texashealth.org

*This support group is free to the community.
No pre-registration required but space is limited.*

*Please do not attend if you have a headache,
fever, body aches, chills, cough,
any COVID or FLU like symptoms.*



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Kaufman County FCH Agent



STAY CONNECTED!

 Facebook

“Kaufman County - Family &
Community Health”

 Youtube

@fchkaufmancounty

 Physical Address

2471 N State Hwy 34
Kaufman, TX 75142

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sarah.matranga@ag.tamu.edu
469-376-4520



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