An online Issue Identification Forum is being held in Tarrant County, to assist local Extension Agents and the Leadership Advisory Board identify the most critical issues affecting local citizens. Our local Extension "One Day 4-H" program has a rich history of providing educational programs that address the most critical issues in the county, related to Agriculture and Natural Resources, Families and Health, Youth Development and Community Development. In order to make sure that the programs being planned for the future are on target, we invite your participation in the Online Issue Forum.

To participate, go to http://extensionissues.tamu.edu. The online survey should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete, and will provide us with valuable insight into the issues facing citizens in Tarrant County. Your opinion is highly valued in our community, so we truly hope you will take a few minutes to participate.

The online forum is currently open, and will remain open for input until midnight on March 18, 2011. The link to the survey is prominent on the website, but should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Extension office at 817.884.1945.

Thank you for your support of Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Tarrant County.

Velma Tate was elected to 2nd Vice President of Programs, which is a 2 year commitment on the State Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA). She received support of her nomination from TEEA of Tarrant County and her Lake Worth event brings communities together across the entire state. Youth, parents, adult volunteers, and partner organizations worked together to make Texas communities better and in Tarrant County our 4-H clubs provided service in the following ways:

- Operation Appreciation - a send off event for our Service men and women - sponsored by Countryside 4-H;
- Shelter Support - benefitting Mansfield Animal Shelter - sponsored by Western Outlaws 4-H;
- Rope Afghanistan - provides roping supplies, DVD’s and other supplies for our military troops - sponsored by Keller 4-H;
- Beautification Project - landscape project at Jack C. Binion Elementary - sponsored by Voyage 4-H;
- Animal Shelter Assistance - benefitting White Settlement Animal Shelter - sponsored by Westside 4-H;
- Handley Fest - booth for children’s games - sponsored by East Fort Worth 4-H;
- Nash Farm Educational Event - games and educational activities - sponsored by Paws A Plenty 4-H.

If you would like to find out more about the 4-H & Youth Development program in Tarrant County visit our website: http://tarrant.tamu.edu (click on “our programs” then “4-H”).

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.
Youth Livestock Projects - Is It All About Winning?

Kenneth Johnson, Jr  County Extension Agent - Agriculture & NR

One purpose of youth (4-H and FFA) livestock projects is to teach young people how to take care of animals. Another is to show their animals at fairs for judging. The most important purpose is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of the young person.

Youth livestock projects provide an opportunity for “family time”. If the right amount of time and energy is spent by the youngster and the adult together on the project then development of positive life skills is attained. If the percentage gets skewed then we see a group of youngsters who are spoiled and parents who are blaming everyone else for their mishaps.

We have to face the fact that for the most part youth livestock projects are not economically sound. But, very few positive youth development activities are founded basically on economic outcomes. Paying for music lessons, sending youth to summer sports camps or various other activities rarely has an economic benefit. If a parent’s goal is for their child to make money, acquire enough scholarships to pay for college then get a job, then don’t invest in a high yield money market or savings account. However, if a parent’s goal is to invest in the future and to help their son or daughter develop as a person, learn responsibility, set goals and gain some knowledge about livestock production, then 4-H and FFA livestock projects are good investments.

Here are a few intangible benefits associated with youth livestock projects:

- **How To Get Along With Others** – A true lost art today is the ability to communicate effectively with others to either resolve differences or collectively work towards a goal. Even though youth involved with livestock projects are placed in a competitive situation, they are around people with similar ideas and they learn to talk with these people.

- **Responsibility** – The daily care and feeding of another living creature is responsibility at the highest level. The youth who excel in livestock projects are those who develop a schedule, follow it religiously and allocate the necessary time and resources to attain the goals they’ve set for themselves. This a good asset to develop at an early age, which will reap huge benefits in later years.

- **Sportsmanship** – At any given competitive event there can only be one winner. However, there can be, and are many winners, especially at a livestock show. Most youngsters who spend any length of time participating in livestock projects will have the opportunity to experience both the euphoria of winning and the utter disappointment of a project that did not turn out so well. Both are equally important even though we value winning more than the alternative. Victory with honor is just as important as accepting defeat and determining how to do better next time. Young people are extremely resilient if they have been afforded positive adult behavior modeling. In other words, as adults we should display the correct behavior in winning and losing and the youth will mimic our actions. Most often at livestock shows after the competitive event has ended, the young people are sitting around laughing and talking – enjoying each other’s company and life together.

- **Decision Making** – Critical decisions at various points in our life are never easy. Livestock projects require decisions: to buy or sell; on project selection, feeding methods, grooming techniques and exercise schedules. Decisions which will have a profound impact on the outcome of the project. In addition, since we counsel from others the youth learn they can gather information, and make sound decisions through a process which can be utilized under various circumstances.

- **Goal Setting** – Every successful youth livestock project has a good plan. It was well thought out, written down and built on previously acquired knowledge, either first-hand or through learning from others. Setting attainable goals is a life lesson that is valuable and useful for any future endeavor.

We sometimes hear of the negative side of youth livestock projects, but I do know this, we are way ahead of any of the challenges that don’t have development. Next time you are in attendance at a livestock show, watch kids instead of the livestock, you will see the winners.

What are your attitudes/values about money?

Do you tend to do things the way your parents did (or do you find yourself rebelling against their example?)? A lot of people would argue that understanding yourself (i.e., what drives your spending and saving decisions) is critical to achieving financial success. It is very common for money personalities to get in the way of making good choices. A study published by the American Psychological Association found that the #1 source of stress for Americans is money. This emphasizes the importance of exploring our feelings and attitudes about money. The ultimate goal is not necessarily to change your current personality/values to different ones; it is to learn to prosper with your values.

Experts have different names for these money personalities. Jordan Goodman, author of “Master Your Money Type: Using Your Financial Personality to Create a Life of Wealth and Freedom” summarizes money types as:

- **STRIVERS** - You are all about achieving success and beating others. You know just how successful you are by buying lots of stuff. Money equals success. Ambition is the upside; overspending is the downside.

- **OSTRICHES** - You are uncomfortable with money, even confused, intimidated or embarrassed by it. So you bury your (financial) head in the sand. The upside is you’re not consumed by stress. The downside is eventually you’ll wind up reconsidering your aversion to money problems and not setting financial goals.

- **DEBT DESPERADOS** - You get a thrill for buying, which leads you to overspend. You quickly accumulate debt and may find yourself on the run from creditors. If there is an upside, it is that you understand the anguish debt can cause and that you can be motivated to pay off debt. The downside is that you are often bailed out through credit cards.

- **COASTERS** - You may be coping or even thriving financially, but a lack of money crisis has made you comfortable with the status quo. The upside is that you’re organized and responsible. But complementing factors are missing you’re missing out on opportunities and greater prosperity.

- **HIGH ROLLERS** - You’re a thrill-seeker and gambler with money, thinking you’re smarter than others and are certain you’ll get a “big score.” The upside is that you’re comfortable with risk, which can pay off with big rewards. The downside is that unbridled risk-taking can be dangerous and can land you in financial ruin.

- **SQUIRRELS** - You hoard your money like a squirrel gathering nuts for the winter. You’re intensely afraid of losing money and gear a deal of effort to spend less. The upside is you’re an excellent saver, but often at the expense of other things money is good for – spending, giving, etc.

A recent report from Investments outlined six financial benefits and habits that they found too be most important in achieving financial security:

1. **Realistic Expectations**
2. **Resisting temptation for quick rewards and fads**
3. **Patience in the face of adversity**
4. **Greater satisfaction from saving than spending**
5. **Ability to tolerate above-average risk**
6. **Receptivity to advice about how to save and invest**

Money Saving Ideas for the Winter Holidays

- **Refrigerate candies before use; they’ll actually burn longer.**
- **Smaller plates deter guest from taking more than they really want.**
- **Limit the bar to just beer and wine. (We doubt any of yours would complain.)**
- **Embellish mug handles and stemware bases with differ- ent, colored curling ribbons.**
- **Go online. Check out internet sites that compare prices for items offered online. Some sites also may compare prices offered at stores in your area. If you decide to buy online, keep shipping costs and delivery time in mind.**
- **Ask about sale adjustments.**
- **COASTERS** - You are coping or even thriving financially, but a lack of money crisis has made you comfortable with the status quo. The upside is that you’re organized and responsible. But complementing factors are missing you’re missing out on opportunities and greater prosperity.
- **HIGH ROLLERS** - You’re a thrill-seeker and gambler with money, thinking you’re smarter than others and are certain you’ll get a “big score.” The upside is that you’re comfortable with risk, which can pay off with big rewards. The downside is that unbridled risk-taking can be dangerous and can land you in financial ruin.

Some banks and credit unions offer special holiday accounts that allow withdrawals before the holiday season. Start plan- ning for 2011.
In a volatile job search environment that seems to be changing by the second, rather than by the season, it is important to make the best use of every opportunity we have to acquire that coveted position in the field of our interest. We’ve all worked hard on our resumes; we’ve drafted, modified, edited, changed, added in, and rewrote! We’ve put it out there to market ourselves and it has fulfilled its purpose because we have been offered an interview. Now what? We have to prepare! However, preparation is multifaceted and we have to take it one step at a time, even if the steps have to go quite quickly. So, let’s start by considering one of the most difficult questions asked of us during an interview:

What strengths would you bring to this position, if hired?

What are your strengths?

Many times, we are not aware of our own strengths. Remember, strengths can be any one or more of what you possess in behaviors, skills, knowledge, and talent that you consistently and effectively make use of to produce with excellence. So, to identify these, ask yourself these questions in advance:

1. When do I learn with ease? What kinds of tasks and activities have I shown an ability to master with ease?
2. Where and when do I seem to perform with the highest levels of success?
3. In what areas do you experience self satisfaction? When do you enjoy your work the most?
4. What kind of activities keep you focused and engaged?

At this point, you want to make sure you are able to translate these answers into strengths. For example, if I perform at my best when faced with situations that challenge me to incorporate my abilities in organization, I can share with a potential employer that “Working as an assistant under three different agents allowed me an opportunity to experience distinctly different management styles. My ability to adjust as needed to meet each of their needs is a strength I can bring to my new position, if afforded the opportunity.”

Remember, answer these questions about yourself, identify the strengths that you were using in those cases, and practice sharing about those strengths before walking into your interview. Here are a few strengths that you might not have considered!

- adapting • budgeting • creating • deciding • developing • examining • formulating
- evaluating • handling • innovating • improving • managing • negotiating • organizing
- persuading • problem-solving • researching • supervising • training • updating
- verifying • writing

There are two broad categories of fats. The two categories are oils and solid fats. Oils and solid fats are composed of different fatty acid, which give them different properties and causes them to function differently in the body.

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. For the most part, oils are composed of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. Oils are found in many places. Some are used for cooking, some are found naturally in foods, and some foods are made mostly of oils.

Oils used for cooking:
- Canola oil
- Corn oil
- Olive oil

Foods that naturally contain oils:
- Nuts
- Fish
- Olives
- Avocados

Foods made mostly of oils:
- Tub margarine
- Squeeze margarine
- Some salad dressings

Oils are healthy and contain vitamin E and essential fatty acids

Solid Fats are fats that are solid at room temperature. Many solid fats come from foods of animal origin; however there are a couple of exceptions. Shortening, and stick margarine are made from vegetable oil but are considered solid fats because of their high saturated fat and trans fat content.

Examples of solid fat are:
- Butter, lard, shortening, beef fat (tallow), stick margarine

Foods generally made with solid fats:
- Baked goods
- Tortillas
- Cookies
- Crackers

Solid fats are high in saturated fats, trans fat, and sometimes cholesterol. Eating solid fats has a negative effect on health. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, consumption of saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol raises LDL blood cholesterol levels (bad cholesterol). High blood cholesterol, especially high LDL cholesterol, is a risk factor for heart disease.

Saturated fats occur naturally in many foods. The majority come from animal sources, including meat and dairy products. Many baked and fried foods can also contain high amounts of saturated fats.

Trans fat is found naturally in foods of animal origin but it is also created through a process called hydrogenation. Only 20% of trans fat comes from foods of animal origin, whereas 80% of trans fat comes from processed foods and hydrogenated oils.

Limit saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol intake to reduce the risk of high cholesterol, heart disease, and coronary artery disease.
The following check list, may help you address this “salty issue” based on your actions. Do you.....

- shake a little salt on your food only after you taste it?
- enjoy plenty of fresh and frozen fruits and veggies?
- keep the salt shaker in the cabinet, not on the table or kitchen counter where it’s easier to use?
- skip the salt in cooking water for pasta, rice and vegetables?
- season food mostly with herbs, spices, or fruit juice?
- read the Nutrition Facts on food labels to check the amount of sodium in food?
- consider the sodium content of restaurant or “fast food” if you eat out regularly?
- enjoy processed meats, such as corned beef, ham, bacon, bologna or hot dogs in moderation?
- buy brands of prepared foods and snack foods that have less sodium or salt?
- go easy on condiments, such as mustard, ketchup, soy sauce and tarter sauce or use low-sodium brands?
- balance your food choices ~ if you enjoy some foods with more sodium, also eat others with less?

How Many Did You Check?

9-11 items: Good Job!! You are likely consuming moderate amounts of sodium and salt
6-8 items: You are controlling the sodium and salt in your food choices, but may be able to “shake the sodium habit” even more.
5 or fewer: Don’t despair...by putting these tips into action, you’ll not only increase the number of checks on the list, but more importantly will help lower your sodium to enjoy better health ~ Good Luck!

Reference: American Dietetics Association
The topic of Bullying is in the hearts and minds of just about everyone around. It has sparked countless conversations within schools, news stations and board rooms. The following is a start to understanding Bullying better and how to deal with it if it's your child who is directly affected. This article was taken from American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Bullying is a common experience for many children and adolescents. Surveys indicate that as many as half of all children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10 percent are bullied on a regular basis.

Bullying behavior can be physical or verbal. Boys tend to use physical intimidation or threats, regardless of the gender of their victims. Bullying by girls is more common verbal, usually with another girl as the target. Recently, bullying has even been reported in online chat rooms and through e-mail.

Children who are bullied experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance. Some victims of bullying have even attempted suicide rather than continue to endure such harassment and punishment.

Children and adolescents who bully thrive on controlling or dominating others. They have often been the victims of physical abuse or bullying themselves. Bullies may also be depressed, angry or upset about events at school or at home. Children targeted by bullies also tend to fit a particular profile. Bullies often choose children who are passive, easily intimidated, or have few friends. Victims may also be smaller or younger, and have a harder time defending themselves.

If you suspect your child is bullying others, it's important to seek help for him or her as soon as possible. Without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal difficulties. Talk to your child's pediatrician, teacher, principal, school counselor, or family physician. If the bullying continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional should be arranged. The evaluation can help you and your child understand what is going on, and how you can help develop a plan to stop the destructive behavior.

If you suspect your child may be the victim of bullying or you are concerned about bullying, ask him or her to tell you what's going on. You can help by providing lots of opportunities to talk with you in an open and honest way. It's also important to respond in a positive and accepting manner. Let your child know how much you love and support him or her, and that he or she did the right thing by telling you. Other specific suggestions include the following:

Bullying, “Facts for Families,” No. 80 (5/08)

- Ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. What's already been tried? What worked and what didn't?
- Seek help from your child's teacher or the school guidance counselor. Most bullying occurs on playgrounds, in lunchrooms, and bathrooms, on school buses or in unsupervised halls. Ask the school administrators to find out about programs other schools and communities have used to help combat bullying, such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, and anger management training, and adult supervision.
- Don't encourage your child to fight back. Instead, suggest that he or she try walking away to avoid the bully, or that they seek help from a teacher, coach, or other adult.
- Help your child practice what to say to the bully so he or she will be prepared the next time.
- Help your child practice being assertive. The simple act of insisting that the bully leave him alone may have a surprising effect. Explain to your child that the bully’s true goal is to get a response.
- Encourage your child to be with friends when traveling back and forth from school, during shopping trips, or on other outings.

Bullies are less likely to pick on a child in a group. If your child is withdrawn, depressed or reluctant to go to school, or if you see a decline in school performance, additional consultation or intervention may be required. A child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional can help your child and family and the school develop a strategy to deal with the bullying. Seeking professional assistance earlier can lessen the risk of lasting emotional consequences for your child.

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Experimentation with alcohol and drugs during adolescence is common. Unfortunately, teenagers often don’t see the link between their actions today and the consequences tomorrow. They also have a tendency to feel indestructible and immune to the problems that others experience.

Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age has negative health effects. While some teens will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally, without significant problems, others will develop a dependency, moving on to more dangerous drugs and causing significant harm to themselves and possibly others. It is difficult to know which teens will experiment and stop and which will develop serious problems. Teenagers at risk for developing serious alcohol and drug problems include those:

- with a family history of substance abuse
- who are depressed
- who have low self-esteem, and
- who feel like they don’t fit in or are out of the mainstream

Some teens abuse a variety of drugs, both legal and illegal. Legally available drugs include alcohol, prescribed medications, inhalants (fumes from glues, aerosols, and solvents) and over-the-counter cough, cold, sleep, and diet medications. The most commonly used illegal drugs are marijuana (pot), stimulants (cocaine, crack, and speed), LSD, PCP, opiates, heroin, and designer drugs (Ecstasy). The use of illegal drugs is increasing, especially among young teens. The average age of first marijuana use is 14, and alcohol use can start before age 12. The use of marijuana and alcohol in high school has become common.

Drug use is associated with a variety of negative consequences, including increased risk of serious drug use later in life, school failure, and poor judgment which may put teens at risk for accidents, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex, and suicide.

Parents are encouraged to talk with their children about the dangers of drugs and experimentation, engage in open communication, serve as a positive role model, and be alert to warning signs.

Warning signs of teenage alcohol and drug abuse may include:

**Physical**: Fatigue, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, and a lasting cough.

**Emotional**: personality change, sudden mood changes, irritability, irresponsible behavior, low self-esteem, poor judgment, depression, and a general lack of interest.

**Family**: starting arguments, breaking rules, or withdrawing from the family.

**School**: decreased interest, negative attitude, drop in grades, many absences, truancy, and discipline problems.

**Social problems**: new friends who are less interested in standard home and school activities, problems with the law, and changes to less conventional styles in dress and music.

Some of the warning signs listed above can also be signs of other problems. If a parent has concerns, he/she may want to consult a physician to rule out causes of the signs.

Source: Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry