

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

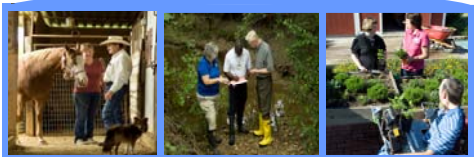


PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

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Making a Difference In Tarrant County



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You can find us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/agrilife.tarrant



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Roy Charles Brooks

Commissioner Pct. 2
Andy Nguyen

County Judge
B. Glen Whitley

Commissioner Pct. 3
Gary Fickes

Commissioner Pct. 4
J. D. Johnson

**Photo courtesy of Tarrant County*

We're proud to be part of the Tarrant County family!

COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS

County government plays an important role in the life of your family and community keeping records and vital statistics, managing courts and jails, building roads, providing a human-services safety net and overseeing many other programs. Efficient and effective, Tarrant County works hard to ensure the best quality of life for its residents.



FAST FACTS

Established.....1849
Population.....1.9m
Land Area.....863 sq.mi.
No. of Cities.....41
No. of School Districts.....19
State & County Districts.....51
County Road Miles.....approx. 413
County Seat.....Fort Worth

TARRANT COUNTY HELPFUL NUMBERS

COUNTY JUDGE

Glen Whitley.....817.884.1441

COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 1

Roy Charles Brooks.....817.531.5600

COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2

Andy Nguyen.....817.548.3900

COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 3

Gary Fickes.....817.581.3600

COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4

J. D. Johnson.....817.238.4400

COUNTY CLERK

Mary Louise Garcia.....817.884.1195

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Sharen Wilson.....817.884.1400

DISTRICT CLERK

Tom Wilder.....817.884.1574

SHERIFF

Dee Anderson.....817.884.3099

TAX ASSESSOR/COLLECTOR

Ron Wright.....817.884.1100

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

G. K. Maenius.....817.884.1732

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION.....817.884.1945

JPS HEALTH NETWORK.....817.921.3431

PUBLIC HEALTH.....817.321.4700

RESOURCE CONNECTION.....817.531.7600

VETERANS SERVICES.....817.531.5645

TARRANT COUNTY'S TOP TEN LIST

Tarrant County provides many programs and services. Some services are initiated by the county and others are programs operated in cooperation with the state and federal government.

1. Commissioners Court

Tarrant County's governing body; four county commissioners and the county judge

2. Public Safety

Sheriff's Department oversees the jail and patrols the unincorporated county; there are constables, a fire marshal, and an emergency management team

3. Courts

Criminal, civil, family and probate courts; jury services; Justices of the Peace

4. District Attorney

Oversee criminal prosecution; represent Child Protective Services; represent all Tarrant County elected officials

5. Public Health Department

Safeguard the health of the community; disease prevention; immunizations; restaurant inspections; promoting a healthy life style

6. AgriLife

Agriculture Extension services; agriculture & consumer science information, outreach education and community problem solving

7. Roads & Transportation

Maintain county roads; contract with cities to repair and service roads; buy right of way

8. Tax Assessor / Collector

Collect taxes for the county and other taxing entities; vehicle transactions

9. County Clerk / District Clerk

Real property records; marriage licenses, birth and death certificates. District Clerk manages state courts

10. Elections

Oversee all federal, state and county elections



Emergency Preparedness for Livestock Producers

A disaster is considered an incident that is beyond the scope where individual, local and community resources can deal with the event as an emergency. This usually indicates the event either happens very rapidly, there is no mitigating control, or both.

Before The Disaster

- **PLAN AHEAD.** Determine the best place for animal confinement in case of a disaster. Find alternate water sources in case power is lost. You should have a minimum of three days feed and water on hand.
- **EVACUATION.** Decide where to take animals if evacuation is necessary. Contact fairgrounds, other producers, and stockyards about their policies and ability to take livestock temporarily in an emergency. Have several sites in mind. Familiarize yourself with several evacuation routes to your destination.
- **IDENTIFICATION.** This is critical! Photograph, identify, and inventory your animals. Permanent identification such as brands, tattoos, ear tags, or microchips are best. Temporary identification, such as tags on halters, livestock markers, paint, and duct tape with permanent writing will also work. Include your name and phone number. Keep identification information with you to verify ownership.
- **MEDICAL RECORDS AND VACCINATIONS.** Your animals need to have current vaccinations. Keep medical histories and record special dosing instructions and dietary requirements. Write down contact information for your veterinarian.
- **VEHICLES.** Keep trailers and vans well-maintained, full of gas, and ready to move at all times. Be sure your animals will load. If you don't have your own vehicles, make arrangements with local haulers or neighbors before disaster strikes.
- **Fire Preparation.** In high risk areas, clear fire breaks around your house, barns, and property lines. Keep fire fighting tools in one location.
- **Flood Preparation.** Identify available high ground on your property or other nearby evacuation sites. Be familiar with road availability during flood conditions.

During The Disaster

Listen to the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) on the TV or radio. Evacuate your livestock early, if possible, to ensure their safety and ease your stress.

Take all vaccination and medical records, the disaster preparedness kit, and enough hay, feed, and water for three days. Call your destination to make sure space is still available. Use roads not in use for human evacuation when you transport your animals to your sheltering site. If you must leave your animals, leave them in the preselected area appropriate for disaster type. Leave enough hay for 48 to 72 hours. Do not rely on automatic watering systems. Power may be lost.

The leading causes of death in large animals during disasters are:

1. Collapsed barns
2. Kidney failure due to dehydration
3. Electrocution from downed power lines
4. Fencing failures

After The Disaster

Check pastures and fences for sharp objects that could injure livestock. Be aware of downed power lines, fallen trees, and debris. Beware of local wildlife, including raccoons and skunks, that may have entered the area and could pose a danger to your animals. Familiar scents and landmarks may have changed, and animals can easily become confused and lost. If you find someone else's animal, call the County Office of Emergency Services or any emergency phone number set up after the disaster. Isolate it from your animals until it is returned to its owner or can be examined by a veterinarian. Always use caution when approaching and handling strange or frightened horses or livestock.

Basic Livestock Disaster Preparedness Kit

- ✓ Portable radio and extra batteries
- ✓ Plastic trash barrel with a lid
- ✓ Water buckets
- ✓ Stored feeds
- ✓ Animal restraint equipment (leads, ropes and halters)
- ✓ First Aid items
- ✓ Tarps
- ✓ Portable Generators
- ✓ Flashlights
- ✓ Lime or Bleach
- ✓ Wire cutters
- ✓ Sharp knife

Just The Facts

- > Adrenalin, panic and confusion affect both humans and animals.
- > The survival instincts of livestock can make normal handling techniques ineffective.
- > The proper disaster management approach needs to vary with each type of disaster.
- > Livestock management priorities during a disaster should focus on immediate safety.

PRACTICE YOUR PLAN!



Morning Routine - Mission Possible

*Marian Ross, M. S.
County Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences*

Back to School = Back to Routine? It really shouldn't, children crave routine - for them it's security in knowing what is going to happen next. Adults have the same need, however, we control the routine and that's what makes it difficult to follow. Make note: how you start the day for your children, sets the tone from wake up to bedtime each and every day.

Some suggestions to start the day off on the **BEST** foot:

- ✓ **Change your outlook on what the morning should be like.** The morning routine is non-negotiable and must be established, and consequences discussed and follow through must happen. For example, your child(ren) refuse to get up on time and they are dragging. That night bedtime is 15 minutes earlier.
- ✓ **Wake up 15 minutes earlier the first 2-3 weeks of school.** Why? To allow for the occasional oversleep and getting both parents and children back on track. Which may mean everyone goes to bed 15-30 minutes earlier. (Yes night owls, I totally understand)
- ✓ **Get everything lined out the night before.** So really you have two routines. Do everything that can be done the night before, i.e. pack lunches, plan breakfast, pack backpacks and review homework (well before bedtime) and other things that go back to school. Number 1 thing - lay out clothes that means choosing the outfit, socks, underwear, shoes and hair accessories for your little fashionista. The only changes allowed would be due to weather. (Or school pictures)
- ✓ **The most important meal of the day.** Even if your child eats breakfast at school start them off with a nutritious breakfast "snack". Plan what's for breakfast, moms and dads, this doesn't mean you are a short order cook, keep it simple - a protein, milk and dairy. A bowl of cereal with fruit and milk or unsweetened juice; scrambled eggs and toast; or even hot cereal with milk and fruit. A breakfast snack - a piece of fruit; graham cracker with some peanut butter or yogurt, especially if your child(ren) has to take medicine first thing in the morning.
- ✓ **Have a list and check it twice.** There are several ways to manage the morning rush to get ready. As your children grow, give them responsibility for getting ready in the morning. Make a jobs list either on a white board or a paper list on a chalkboard where they can see what needs to be done. Each child (maybe even adults) needs to have their own list. Allow your child to assist with creating the list, so there is a clearer understanding of expectations. Children respond positively to checklists because seeing the list reminds them what needs be done. This also provides the opportunity to feel in control of the situation. A fabulous time to empower your children.
- ✓ **Have a little fun in the morning.** Play music or create a morning playlist so your children know by the end of the song they need to move on to the next activity. Most songs average around three and a half minutes. So consider how long it should take your child to fully complete the task without feeling rushed or not completing it at all. Set your kids up for success.
- ✓ **Offer an incentive program.** If your kids finish early and do not give you grief about going to school, offer them something that they would like to do before going off to school such as reading, a computer game or a little TV time. As you know, the other children need to keep getting ready, so consider the incentive happening in the space that will not distract the other child(ren). Be prepared for tantrums from the other children.
- ✓ **How long do I need to wake these children up for school?** Begin giving your children the responsibility to set their alarm, with your assistance, and getting up and getting ready. The kids can wake the parents. When their alarm goes off, they need to come wake you up. Turn the tables so they can "be in charge." (Yes this can work) That means if they are to get up on their own - no hovering - just explain that you won't be able to help them and that means they will go to bed earlier and set their alarm 15 minutes earlier. (Try not to teach the snooze effect).
- ✓ **Lastly, keep all of your items together.** Create an out the door central, so no one is looking for their back pack, purse, keys, shoes, wallet etc. Pack an extra charger in your purse or work bag so that you will always be prepared.

Getting kids ready and off to school shouldn't be a chore or chuck full of tears. Starting your kids off with smiles and laughter will make their day brighter.

Source: Adapted from "Morning Routine - Tips for Making Your Mornings Run Smoothly" www.familyfun.go



Start Your Day Right With Breakfast!

*Darlene Myatt
Extension Agent
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program*

Did you know September is recognized as National Breakfast Month? Unfortunately for many people, breakfast is a low priority or not one at all. If you think you are saving time or cutting calories by skipping breakfast, let's revisit that idea. Starting each morning with a healthy meal can help get you on track to make healthier choices throughout the day, increase your physical activity and help curb overindulging on convenience foods or overeating at lunch. A nutrient-dense breakfast not only replenishes your body, but can have a positive impact on your general health. Check these tips on why a healthy breakfast is important and how to make it happen by planning ahead.

Tips on Making Breakfast a Priority: Skipping Breakfast and Weight Gain...

- Skipping breakfast may increase your chances for weight gain. Eating a morning meal can help reduce hunger and avoid overeating.
- Skipping breakfast may leave you feeling famished, leaving the door open for temptations such as candy, chips and other empty-calorie foods.
- When you are at the grocery store consider buying portable breakfast items such as fruit, lowfat yogurt and whole grain breakfast or granola bars to enjoy eating when on-the-go.

Breakfast and Academic Performance...

- Research shows skipping breakfast can negatively impact student academic performance. As children get older they are less and less likely to eat breakfast.
- Studies by the American Dietetic Association suggest individuals who eat a healthy breakfast are more apt to have better concentration, a higher level of alertness, creativity, miss fewer days of work/school, and be more active.

The Health Benefits of Breakfast...

- Research shows people who eat breakfast regularly have a higher intake of essential vitamins and minerals. They generally have lower serum cholesterol levels which are associated with reduced danger of heart disease.
- Healthy options include:
 - ▶ whole grains - oatmeal, whole grain cereals and breads
 - ▶ low-fat protein - peanut butter, lean slices of poultry, meat or fish
 - ▶ low-fat dairy - low-fat milk, yogurt and cheeses
 - ▶ fruits and vegetables - fresh or frozen or 100% juices

Healthy Breakfast Ideas...

No need for a big production! Here are a few quick and healthy breakfast ideas which include a mix of complex carbs, some lean protein and a little heart-healthy fat/oil.

- Small whole wheat bagel with peanut butter, a banana and a glass of low-fat or skim milk.
- Oatmeal with low-fat or skim milk, topped with dried or fresh fruit and chopped nuts.
- Breakfast parfait made with low-fat yogurt, fruit and low-fat granola.
- Sandwich made with a whole grain English muffin, turkey bacon and reduced-fat cheese.

If you currently skip breakfast, make plans now to jump-start each day in September with a healthy meal and make it a routine for overall health and wellness.



Nutrition Tips for the Fall



Markena Minikon
County Extension Agent
Nutrition & Health



With a new crispness in the air heading your way after our Texas summer get ready to step out and enjoy the fresh, cool weather. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend getting at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise five days a week. Not only is exercise good for your heart health, but it also gives you an extra boost of energy throughout the whole day – which will help as the hours of daylight get shorter.

Exercise tips for Fall:

- Find someone to walk with during halftime of the football game. Set the timer on your phone or watch for 30 minutes and find a route that lands you back at home right in time for kickoff!
- Go apple picking and make sure to walk the entire orchard. Not only is this considered exercise, but you also get to scout out the best looking fruit!
- Find a local place to hike where you can soak up the beautiful autumnal foliage. This is sure to be great for your body and mind.

Not only are there ample opportunities for exercise in the Fall, but healthy eating is easy and satisfying with all the fresh seasonal produce! Some of the produce in season during the Fall months are apples, winter squash, pomegranates, figs, cauliflower, garlic, beets, pears, pumpkin and Swiss chard.

Healthy eating tips for Fall:

- Buy local, in-season produce at a farmers market to ensure that you are getting the freshest fruits and vegetables around. Keep in mind that farmers markets often accept SNAP benefits.
- Try a new green leafy vegetable. Swiss chard is an excellent source of vitamins A, K and C as well as potassium. Simply sauté with oil and garlic and enjoy as a side or add to casseroles.
- Winter squash is abundant in autumn and is low in calories and high in fiber.

Here are some ways to prepare the different kinds of squash:

- Roast spaghetti squash until soft then shred with a fork to create strands and serve like pasta.
- Stuff roasted acorn squash with wild rice, dried cranberries and other vegetables.
- Make butternut squash into a creamy and warming soup.

Source – Healthcare Review Northeast Network



Dividing Your Landscape into “Use Areas”

*Steve Chaney
County Extension Agent*

“It may be argued that real beauty is neither in garden nor landscape, but in the relation of both to the individual, that what we are seeing is not only a scenic setting ... but a background for life,” remarked Sir George Sitwell. Landscapes are more than looks; they reflect on the places where we live and tell us who we are and how we like to spend our lives. The most important part of a landscape is a point of view.

Some folks just want to relax in the yard after work; others expect a landscape to make a statement. The front yard (also the side yard if you live on a corner) is the most visible to neighbors and passersby. Most people want it to be at least neatly kept. The fellow that was taken to court for having a weedy lawn insisted that it was a wildflower garden, but even wildflowers can be in tidy borders.

While you are at the planning stage, divide the landscape into different use areas, considering the view from inside and from outside. You will probably want the front to be for public view, the back for private use, and the work area to stay out of sight from all angles. The public area should be made to fit somewhat into the scheme of the neighborhood, with the architecture of the house dominant and everything else visually secondary. Drives and parking ought to be directly accessible from walkways, which in turn should lead to a door – something people often forget, leaving visitors to guess how they should approach the house.

The plants around the front should need little maintenance, with minimal pruning. Basic landscapes have entirely too many evergreen shrubs, most of which demand pruning several times a season. At the corners, place a shrub or shrubs that, upon maturity, will only reach

about a third, no more than a half the height of the house. Then, accent the entrance with an unusual plant or unique accessory. A few low maintenance orders here and there will go a long way toward filling any gaps left. Add a nice tree or group of trees no closer than 15 feet to help frame it and all the basics are done. Avoid the most common mistake homeowners make of cluttering the front of your home with too many plants. The problem will only worsen with time as the plants mature.



Hedges and fences will often help hide the garbage cans, the old car, the tool shed, the woodpile, and the dog's yard. People frequently fail to consider such camouflage, but a simple wooden lattice on posts with a vine or two can go a long way toward concealing the work area and anything else that lacks aesthetic appeal.

The last big use area of the landscape is the private area; the patio or deck with its bird feeder, swing, grill, pool, sandbox, vegetable garden and everything else you enjoy. You probably have these things near a window (so that you can keep an eye on the kids and the flowers) and a door, through which guests and food may flow freely. You should be able to breathe easily, or even to rant and rave, in the privacy of your own backyard without wondering who is peeking in.

The private area should visually pull you outdoors when you view it through a door or window. As you gaze across the backyard in the wintertime, the birds should seem nearby as if they were in the kitchen or den. A small salad garden or bed for herbs or cut flowers should be handy and visible. The private area should be inviting and fun! Enjoy your planning this Fall and harvest the benefits the rest of your life!

Rose Rosette Revisited



Laura M. Miller
County Extension Agent
Horticulture



Rose Rosette Disease (RRD) is both widely spread in North Texas (Region called epicenter of rose disease epidemic, Fort Worth Star Telegram, Monday, July 20, 2015) and widely misunderstood and misdiagnosed. Since the last Rose Rosette article in this publication in 2013, lessons have been learned and research continues, so this article is intended to be both a review of RRD basics and an update on what we now know about identifying and managing the disease.

What does RRD look like?

It is not attractive. The number one identifying symptom is witches broom, or bunchy distorted stems at the end of a shoot. Other symptoms are malformed flowers and leaves, excessive thorniness (on the bright side, these thorns are usually soft and pliable), red discoloration, flattened and enlarged stems, and lateral shoot elongation. Herbicide damage can also cause deformation of stems, leaves, and flowers, but doesn't cause excessive thorniness and does only occur where herbicides are used.

What is all this talk about microscopic mites?

RRD is caused by a virus, and Emaravirus to be specific, but the virus can't spread on its own because it can't survive outside of a host organism. The virus that causes RRD is vectored, or spread from plant to plant, by tiny Eriophyid mites, *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*. The disease cycle isn't exactly the same, but the same kind of host/vector/virus relationship exists for diseases like West Nile. The mites are not hurt by the virus in the same way that mosquitoes can carry viruses that don't kill them. These little mites can't fly like mosquitoes, but they are so small that they can be blown from plant to plant and that has some management implications. The mites can also crawl from plant to plant, and they can hitch a ride on people who are working or even just walking among plants.

Are Knock Out® roses more susceptible to RRD?

No, they are not. However, there are lots of Knock Out® roses in mass plantings. More roses will equal more RRD. A few other factors are involved. Dense mass plantings of Knock Out® or other landscape roses provide a "super highway" for mites and the disease can spread quickly through those plantings. Knock Out® roses can grow to be tall and may catch more of those wind borne mites. And finally, RRD is often misidentified on Knock Out® roses because of their characteristic red new growth.

Are any roses resistant to RRD?

This is exciting. Host plant resistance to another disease, Black Spot, is the reason so many roses have been planted in the past 20 years. Right now, the official answer is no, there are no proven resistant rose varieties. All roses are considered susceptible. However, there is a list of fifty-five rose cultivars that have not been observed with symptoms in areas where other roses were infected in Texas, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. The list includes all types of roses: floribundas, hybrid teas, shrubs, grandifloras, climbers, rugosa hybrids, etc. In June, at the intersection of Dove Loop and Shadyside, The City of Grapevine installed a trial garden of thirteen of the roses from the list, plus three more that nurseries wanted to include in the trial. Since they were planted, two of those varieties showed symptoms in other locations and another one had the audacity to develop them in the trial. The official answer is still no, but there is hope. Dr. David Byrne, leader of the Texas A&M Rose Breeding and Genetics program is leading a multistate research effort that includes looking for genetic resistance markers.

Which management practices are working?

The primary recommendation is still to remove plants that show symptoms by digging them up, bagging the plant in an attempt to catch the mites, and disposing of the plant in a landfill. Regular removal of infected plants should slow the spread of the disease. This is most effective if roses are regularly inspected for symptoms.

In 2013 and 2014, a team of researchers at the University of Tennessee looked at three other practices; planting barriers of tall ornamental bunch grasses around plots of roses, miticide treatments to prevent infection by mites, and pruning symptomatic canes. Data from the pruning experiment was insufficient to determine the usefulness of that strategy, but the grass barriers did reduce the numbers of symptomatic plants within the plots. Incorporating sections of ornamental grasses, which do not serve as host plants for the mites, into landscape designs featuring mass plantings of roses is a feasible practice and should be considered. Miticides, and they tried seven commercially available products, also worked to prevent symptomatic plants in all but the control and carbaryl plots, but do require significant investments of time and money.

Future research will look at management practices including miticides, antiviral compounds, and predatory mites. Because of the variation in symptoms among varieties and the cost of laboratory testing, the search for easy detection methods will continue. There is also much to learn about the epidemiology of the disease—how does the virus move in the plants, how are the mites affected by temperature, what other factors have an impact on the spread of the disease?

We have a lot to learn, but we are working on it.



To Be Fair

*Shannon Johnson-Lackey
4-H Extension Agent
Cooperative Extension Program*



One of the hardest lessons one has to learn is that life is not always fair. Unfortunately we do not have the fairness police to make sure that everyone plays by the rules, take turns, share and treat others equally. However, we can continue to teach these valuable lessons and provide meaningful experiences that illustrate the importance of being fair. After all, when you are fair, there is peace within you. Therefore we should all strive for peace. A fun book for young children (K-2) to read is *It's Not Fair* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. This book resonates with young children as the characters insist on asking "Why" and concluding that "It's not fair".

The following activities are a fun and simple way to teach the concept of fairness. The first one is about perspective and encouraging youth to view things through various points of view. The second is simply a conversation starter. The first activity was taken from the Isabella County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition. The second was taken from Teaching Tolerance, www.tolerance.org.

Point of View

Purpose: To help children understand that there are often many sides to a situation, and that we can't always know the whole story.

Procedure

- Give each child a sheet of scrap paper.
- Have students poke a hole in the center of their paper with a pencil.
- Hold papers up and look through the holes.
- Ask, "What can you see?"
- Instruct the students to put papers down and look in the same direction.
- Ask, "Has the scene changed? What do you see now? What is the difference between what you saw through the hole and what you see without the paper?"
- Explain, to be fair to people, we often need to try to see what they see through their "holes".

Fair or Unfair

1. In many countries, girls are not allowed to go to school but boys are.
FAIR UNFAIR
2. Today all students who are wearing blue will have no homework.
FAIR UNFAIR
3. Some kid's parents will buy them cell phones and others won't
FAIR UNFAIR
4. For the next test, the boys will get an answer key to help them study.
FAIR UNFAIR



Playing Sports

*Cassius McAlister
4-H Extension Agent
Cooperative Extension Program*

What to do when lil Jane or John want to participate in a sport. Or whenever little Jane or John say they would like to participate in extracurricular sports whether at school or part of a city team here are some things to consider.

1. Cost

No matter where or what sport they want to play, as a parent the first thing I look at is cost. I want to know if I am getting my money's worth. How much will the necessary equipment cost to play the sport? What things will be included in the cost participating in the sport such as a jersey, etc.? Will travel be involved? What level of competition such as local city or association is involved? This need may be determined by whether or not lil Jane or John have competed in this sport prior (Beginner vs. skilled competitor). The expertise of the coach may add to the cost.

2. Theme

Make sure to choose a sport that lil Jane or John is interested in. So remember to think about what activities interest your child? In my opinion, lots of time parents do not consider the youth's interest in the sport and choose a sport the parents wants. But let's not forget that lil Jane or John should not have to decide what sport to specialize in at an extremely young age. Let them try different sports. They should not have to decide at 7-11 years old what sport they want to go pro in.

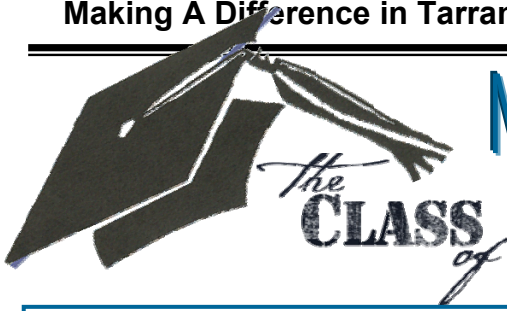
3. Time

How much time will have to be devoted? Whether it's practice time or game time, how much time will I devote to getting lil Jane or John to and from this sport? Will there be extra time devoted to clinics that need to be attended? Make sure to see if the practice and game times fit your work schedule to ensure lil Jane or John can make it to all team functions. Many cities offer sports opportunities but fill up fast due to demand. With that fact in mind do not wait until the last minute! To increase your option do not wait until the last minute to sign up lil Jane or John for their chosen sports. Remember some sports require early morning practices so make sure this will not compromise your schedule. Also, if lil Jane or John has participated in this sport prior; take into consideration how competitive she or he is because some participants can and want to be pushed and others are just in it for the experience.

4. Places to Search

Here are some places to search for a sport you can visit your city's website, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, Community/Recreation Centers and other sport league or association websites.

These are some of the decisions that have to be made when searching for a sport.



Making the Most of the Senior Year

*Cindy Bryant
County Extension Agent 4-H*

While many teens daydream for years about their senior year in high school, somehow it seems to appear quickly. All the plans of senior year activities and goals are suddenly under review. For families with a student approaching the senior year, it is wise to discuss goals, time management, commitments, and finances.

Setting goals is a process of defining your "ideal" future and it can be a source of motivation for achievement. A goal is similar to a destination. Knowing what one wants to accomplish can help him determine the best path to take.

Include both long-term and short-term goals. Creating a five-year list can help a person plan the steps needed to achieve those goals. As the necessary steps are listed, the short-term goals become easier to define.

Strong goals are clearly stated, measurable, and have a time-line. Clearly stated goals help one to stay on the path, without wavering. Measurable goals enable one to recognize when it has been achieved and a time-line serves as a reminder that it is time to advance to the next level. Through this process, teens are able to recognize the relationship between diligent efforts and accomplishments. As they successfully progress through life experiences, their confidence begins to increase. The increased confidence can be a motivating factor in the pursuance of the next, more challenging goal.

Time management is an essential skill. Teens and adults often state that they do not have enough time to do everything they want to do. In reality, this is an accurate statement. We live in a fast-paced society and opportunities abound. Time is a limited commodity, so it is important that one spends it wisely. Reflecting on stated goals helps one decide the most effective use of his time.

Commitment is a resolve to fulfill a responsibility or obligation. It is an important element of character development which emerges into dependability. For teens thinking about their senior year and all the opportunities which lie in the future, it is easy to over-commit one's time or resources in the excitement of the moment. It is wise to seriously consider all factors and commit only to the tasks or causes that are the best fit with your goals.

Finances may not be the most important, but it is another reality of life. The teen years provide a wonderful opportunity to learn how to manage one's finances. Learning key concepts such as "Income vs. Expenses" and "Needs vs. Wants" are very important to one's financial literacy. Concepts can be learned from a book, but developing a resolve to delay gratification when needed is an essential life skill which is best learned from experience.

In summary, the high school senior year is an exciting time for the entire family. It represents many years of hard work and diligent efforts in pursuit of a diploma. It is a time to celebrate the accomplishments and milestones up to this point, with the anticipation of even more in the future. Taking the time to discuss goals, time management, commitments, and finances can enable families to reduce some of the "final year stress" and focus on creating exciting memories that will be treasured in years to come.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE
PO BOX 1540
FORT WORTH TX 76101 1540

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CONTACT US

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Tarrant County Office
200 Taylor St., Suite 500
Fort Worth, TX 76196
TEL: 817.884.1945
FAX: 817.884.1941

E-mail: Tarrant-TX@tamu.edu
Web: <http://tarrant-tx.tamu.edu>

Editorial Team

Jacobsen

Joan Imlay Jacobsen, Ph.D.
County Extension Director

Mary H. Oviedo
Office Manager