



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TARRANT COUNTY

## Director's Message

Howdy from your local Tarrant County AgriLife Extension Office! As always, we hope this newsletter finds you well; and that you and those around you are healthy and safe.

If you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to serve you, please contact our office. Also, join us in welcoming our two newest Tarrant County AgriLife team members, Yahaira and Emily!



Courtney Davis,  
Tarrant County Extension Director



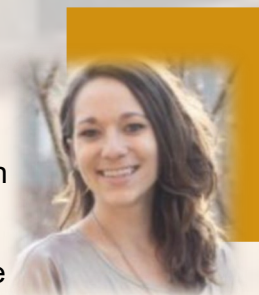
## Yahaira Lozano

Hi! I am Yahaira Lozano, a Nutrition Education Assistant for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). I am from Mexico City, but I graduated from St. Augustine High School in Fort Worth. In my spare time, I enjoy exercising and spending time with my family.

My mission as an EFNEP educator is to motivate individuals to establish desirable food and nutrition behaviors for good health. I look forward to making a positive impact on the families throughout the county by empowering them to improve their dietary patterns, increase physical activity, and strive for happy and healthy mealtimes!

## Emily Shannon

Howdy! My name is Emily Shannon, and I am the new 4-H Extension Agent with Prairie View A&M University in Tarrant County. Prior to joining this great team, I worked with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in investigations in Tarrant County. I grew up in Fort Worth with my parents, older sister, and tons of family pets. I graduated from Arlington Heights High School, where I participated in FFA and discovered my passion for agriculture. After high school, I graduated from Louisiana State University in 2014 (Geaux Tigers!) with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Education with a concentration in Leadership and Development. During my time at LSU, I had the opportunity to experience a wide variety of environmental and agricultural studies and practices, including competing on the LSU soil judging team.



I moved back to Fort Worth in the summer of 2017 with my giant dog Todd, who is half Great Pyrenees and half hound. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family, cooking, painting, and hiking in state parks. While I have an extensive bucket list, one of my goals is to visit and hike through all sixty-three National Parks.



# FOND Farewell!

A fond farewell to my friends, colleagues, partners, and community as the year of the Pandemic slowly closes and the new chapter of my life begins in retirement.

The last 16+ years here in Tarrant County have flown by fast. I have met and worked with thousands of really great people. It has been a pleasure to have interacted with all of you and look forward to lots of great memories.

I am not sure where my next steps lie; I just know it is time to end this part of my life and embark on the next stage. I will still be here in town, with the same cell number, by the way, so feel free to call and stay in touch.

I have been advised to find a hobby besides work; that may be a difficult journey but one day at a time.

Your friend, your colleague, your partner! Happy Gardening!!! *Steve Chaney*



## Congratulations Master Gardeners!

Congratulations to our very own Tarrant County Master Gardeners for receiving the first-place award for 2019 Outstanding MG Association in Texas voted on by a panel of judges from other states extension services!  
**Way to go!**

# Hello 2021!!!

*Jacklyn Jones-Doyle, County Extension Agent, Agriculture/Natural Resources*

Now that we have successfully survived the challenges that 2020 has presented to not only the Agricultural industry but to every industry worldwide, we can begin to look forward to what 2021 will have to offer. Though we may have to wade through some more challenges, I believe with the help of technology and the perseverance that we as Americans have always possessed, we will be able to meet these new challenges head-on.



This year the Ag & Natural Resource Department will be working closely with other program partners to ensure that we provide you with the continuing education and information you are needing. Program partners will include the Fort Worth Farm & Ranch Club, as well as the Cowtown Cattlewomen's Association. Contrary to belief, you do not need to be actively involved in agriculture to participant in either of these associations. If you are looking to learn more about different parts of the agricultural industry, please be sure to reach out for more information about these associations as well as meeting times and locations.

I am proud to announce that adversity and challenges have not gotten in the way of your Youth Livestock Exhibitors for the Spring Texas Major Livestock Shows. The 4-H and FFA exhibitors will be exhibiting their livestock projects at various shows across the state this Spring. A big thanks to all the major shows that were able to get COVID-19 guidelines in place to allow these junior livestock exhibitors to showcase their hard work. I am also proud to say the Tarrant County Junior Livestock Show is continually moving forward with planning the 2021 show. The dates for this show will be March 3 - 6. Please be sure to come out and support the youth of Tarrant County.

As always, please feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or concerns you may have. Also, be sure to keep an eye out on our website and Facebook page for any upcoming meetings and events.

Facebook page: Tarrant Co - Ag & Natural Resources

Website: <https://tarrant-tx.tamu.edu/>





# Bringing the Science of Agriculture to the Classroom

Jacqui Frampton, County Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development



Did you know that it takes 21 days for a chicken egg to hatch? That is just one example of what students across Tarrant County schools will learn in an engaging agricultural science program slated for Spring 2021. The 4-H Youth Development department of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is planning to offer *Hatching in the Classroom*, a three-week curriculum enrichment experience in which students can incubate and hatch chicken eggs with their teacher and classmates. The target grade for this program is grades 2-5, however the lessons could be

adjusted to accommodate all grade levels K-12. Through this educational series, students have the opportunity to study embryos at different stages of growth to gain a deeper understanding of biological concepts and life sciences. Learning objectives are split up by week:

Week 1 - All About Incubation and Parts of an Egg

Week 2 – Embryonic Development and Egg Candling

Week 3 – Getting Ready for Hatch and Building the Brooder Box Habitat

The COVID-19 Pandemic has presented many new challenges this year for schools. Whether teaching online, in-person, or hybrid, teachers are always looking for new and creative ways to keep students engaged. Giving students the opportunity to conduct a longitudinal science project with real-world application can be one of them. Of course, flexibility in programming has been key for 2020 will need to be the same in 2021. Teachers will have the option to check out “Hatching Kits” and do the program in their physical classroom with accompanying educational videos or by utilizing the educational videos only in their virtual classroom. Teachers who choose to hatch their own chicks will be provided with all the necessary equipment to set up their hatch. This includes an incubator, brood box, heat lamp, and trays for feeding and watering. Fertile eggs will also be provided for those teachers who do not already have their own source. Any chicks that hatch can be picked up after a few days and returned to their hatchery. This leaves the handling of logistical challenges like finding viable eggs and homes for the chicks to the Extension educator and not the teacher.

For more information on this program, e-mail [jacqueline.frampton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jacqueline.frampton@ag.tamu.edu).

**Fun Fact:** Did you know? Incubation times for eggs vary by species. For example, duck and turkey eggs take 28 days to hatch, while a Japanese quail egg only takes 17-18 days.

# 4-H Water Education Program Goes Virtual

Jordan Peldyak, Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program, 4-H Youth Development

The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic has had some bright spots when it comes to providing education to audiences who may not have been reached before or could not attend in-person classes. The 4-H education class series was transitioned to a fully online platform this fall. The classes are offered online for six weeks focusing on the following topics:

- Journey to 2050 Global Water Supply
- Global Water Distribution
- Water and Landforms
- Natural Water Cycle
- 4-H2O Carbon Dioxide Effects
- Calculating Water Usage

The Enviroscape water table is also used to show water pollution effects on our freshwater sources.

Each class includes an experiential activity youth can perform at home with supplies provided by extension. Some of the hands-on learning projects include measuring global water sources in a scaled-down version using cups, creating landforms and water runoff with aluminum foil, generating our own carbon dioxide in water, calculating each individual family’s home water usage and building lava lamps to examine water density. Participants have the opportunity to present their work to one another.

Youth receive a virtual certificate of completion and have the option to pick up a hard copy of it from the County Extension Office. The feedback received from families after this first attempt of water education going online was great! A quote from one of the youths that participated is, “I really enjoyed the projects online and I had a lot of fun, thank you.”

Overall, the program has had a great impact. In 2020, there was 106 youth who took part in the online water education series. Of the eighty-two youth surveyed, the results indicate the following: 94% can reduce water usage in home and community by tracking multiple sources, 94% would like a career in water conservation or another STEM field, and 98% can locate areas of point source pollution. In the future, this program will continue to be offered in Tarrant County throughout the year and possibly to other counties interested in the 4-H water & conservation project.

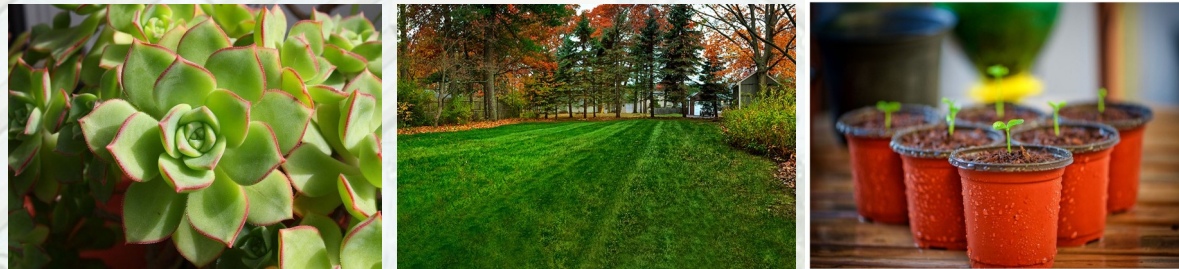
Calculate your own water usage at home.

AVERAGE USE				CALCULATED USE			
Activity	Water Used	Number of	Gallons	Activity	Water Used	Total	Gallons
Dishwasher	12 gallons per load			Garbage Disposal	4 gallons per minute		
Toilet Flushing	4 gallons per flush			Brushing Teeth	4 gallons per minute		
Bathing	45 gallons (full tub)			Washing Hands	4 gallons per minute		
Laundry	43 gallons per load			Washing Dishes by Hand	4 gallons per minute		
				Shower	4 gallons per minute		



# Horticulture in 2020

Steve Chaney, County Extension Agent, Horticulture



As we end 2020, we must look back and see all the changes that Covid-19 brought to the world, most of them not very positive! Going into 2021 things are looking up a bit, vaccines are out, and maybe an end to the misery caused by 2020? In March we found out that working remotely was going to be the new norm for lots of people. A lot of people were home for the first time, and they feared the uncertainty, so they turned to their "County Agent" to get answers they could trust!!

In March when we started working remotely, we had to suddenly find ways to answer people's questions, finish up series of classes, be in front of the people in the community so they could ask their questions and feel safe the answers were research-based! We started getting 20-40 phone calls a day asking about gardening, vegetables, herbs, lawns, etc. At the same time, we were getting 15-25 e-mails asking much of the same thing. The cities were asking for classes to help their citizens out, garden clubs were begging for speakers, and lots of other groups as well.

We started up a virtual class on Saturdays from May-Dec for people in the community, to learn more about environmentally safe ways to be a part of their yard. We started virtual classes for clubs, cities, and the community to help answer some of the questions while we taught ourselves how to teach virtually! Our Tarrant County Master Gardener volunteers maintained the many demo projects for people to see and enjoy. We developed a great phone message bank to help answer all the gardening questions, MG's were working virtually from their homes sending out replies to all the emails. Also, hosting two state-wide advanced trainings virtually for other MG's to show them ways to help their community. Our Statewide Horticulture team filmed FB live videos twice a week from March through December 2020 that was recorded and made available to everyone in the state.

Heading into 2021 we are planning on offering new and exciting virtual education to our community, working with various partners to better serve the folks in our area. Here's to hopefully a much better year in 2021 with new adventures, and great gardening!

The end of the season is the time to remove your spent vegetable plants, clean up plant debris and weeds, and winterize your lawn furniture and water features. Some easy Autumn garden ideas include raking leaves onto the lawn and mowing them with a grass catcher. Start a compost pile so nothing leaves your property, divide and move your perennials, prune things down to a manageable size and most importantly mulch everything well for the cool weather!!

# Water Efficient Recognized Green Professionals

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

In January 2016, thirty-five landscape service providers with a desire to establish and maintain environmentally sustainable landscapes met at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden to become the first class of the Water Efficient Recognized Green Professionals (aka Green Pros) program. Originally a partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Tarrant County and the Tarrant Regional Water District, the team expanded to include Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Denton County and the Upper Trinity Regional Water District. There are now 114 Green Pros working at 62 different companies and campuses.

Water conservation continues to be a key to future economic growth in North Texas, even when we are faced with a public health crisis. Our current situation makes gathering for classes impractical, but technology will allow green industry professionals to continue to learn about Low Impact Development from Dr. Fouad Jaber, managing turfgrass efficiently from Dr. Becky Grubbs Bowling and Extension Irrigation Program Specialist Charles Swanson will join us from College Station with an update on irrigation technology. The series of five virtual classes will be complimented by two in person outdoor field days to get a hands-on perspective of the topics in a safe real-life environment.

If you are in the landscape management business and would like to become a Green Pro, look for registration at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/> Classes begin Wednesday, February 3, 2021. If you'd like to hire a Green Pro, you'll find their contact information at <https://savetarrantwater.com/green-professionals/>.

My contact information:  
Laura M. Miller,  
[lmiller@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:lmiller@ag.tamu.edu),  
817-884-1578.



## Winter Watering Tips

- Turn off the irrigation system

In the winter months, precipitation often exceeds the amount of water that mostly dormant North Texas landscapes require. Excess irrigation can contribute to disease development and unnecessarily large water bills. Save water and your irrigation budget for when it is needed most. There is another big benefit to turning the system switch to the off position: avoiding accidental man-made ice events and any subsequent accidents.

- Water plants in new locations

Fall is for planting, and winter is the best time to move trees, shrubs, and perennials to new locations in the landscape. Recently installed plant material needs a little extra water from the hose or rain barrel every week or so to help the plants establish a strong root system before spring.

- Water well before a freeze

When extremely cold temperatures are expected, watering plants thoroughly before temperatures drop will hold heat in the soil. A "wet cold" may be unpleasant for people, but it is warmer than a "dry cold." Moist soil holds about four times more heat than dry soil and the air temperatures above moist soil can be as much as 5°F warmer than air temperatures above dry soil. Mulch will help hold that moisture in the soil and minimize temperature fluctuations in the root zone.





# Tarrant County EFNEP: A Year in Review

Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Tarrant County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) took on its fair share of challenges in 2020, but we did what was needed to ensure a successful programming year.



As usual, we started busy and strong, reaching students throughout Fort Worth ISD, and forging solid partnerships with new program partners for our adult and youth programs to include Hurst, Euless, Bedford ISD; ACH Family Services of Tarrant County; and Hunter Plaza Apartments.

However, when the COVID-19 outbreak forced us to halt face-to-face programming, we couldn't help but to ask ourselves, "What are we going to do now?" and "How are we going to conduct our program if we can't even meet with our participants?"

We were determined to not allow our program to suffer due to the inability to meet with our participants in person. Therefore, we did what most other learning institutions did, and quickly adapted to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines by converting all youth and adult class options to virtual platforms. The elementary youth curriculum was converted to "click and play" slide videos; the high school curriculum was placed on AgriLife's e-learning website in a self-paced format for students to complete the lesson series in their own time. Adult lesson materials were converted to slides, making them easy to share with participants; and we even adopted a self-paced adult nutrition education series from North Carolina's Extension Program.

Ultimately, Tarrant County EFNEP reached over 150 limited-resource families and over 1,500 limited-resource youth.

We also hosted three student interns from dietetic internship programs.

Our students spent significant time recording cooking demonstration videos and assisting with other Tarrant County Family and Community Health projects. They also attended a school wellness fair at S.S. Dillow Elementary where they spoke with attendees about the amount of sugar in popular beverages.

Notable 2020 program outcomes include:

- 90% of adult participants reported an improvement in diet quality
- 89% of adult participants reported an improvement in food safety practice
- 85% of adult participants reported an improvement in food resource management practices
- 83% of adult participants reported an improvement in physical activity practices
- Adult participants reported an average food cost savings of over \$100 per month
- Over 80% of our youth participants improved in their ability to choose food according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The mountain that is COVID-19 is one we have yet to fully descend. While it has caused us to reevaluate how we conduct our program, it has also created opportunities for us to explore new options and adjust. Were the adjustments we made fail-proof? No, but the important thing is that we did what we could to keep going, and our program is stronger as a result.

## Did You Know...

In 1969 the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) was created by The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as part of a solution to improve poverty and hunger in the country; it made its debut in Alabama as a six-month pilot project that successfully addressed societal concerns and positively influenced nutrition behaviors of limited-resource families. It was, therefore no surprise when Congress authorized funding under the Smith-Lever Act to keep EFNEP going.



# Texas Fights Diabetes

Alaina Woolsey, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health



According to the Centers for Disease Control, Type 2 diabetes is a growing health problem. About 30 million people in the U.S. have the disease with 11% of Tarrant County Residents being diagnosed with diabetes.

Untreated diabetes can lead to long-term health complications, including heart disease, amputations, blindness, and kidney problems. The medical costs for people with diabetes are two times higher than for people without the disease. Increased loss of time from work due to illness and, ultimately, a decreased quality of life are also results.

Research has shown that education is the single most important thing people with diabetes can do to improve their health status and prevent the onset of complications. Individuals with diabetes can control their blood glucose levels and improve their overall health by following their physician's treatment plans.

In partnership with the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Tarrant County Family and Community Health Unit will be offering free diabetes education to the residents of Tarrant County in 2021. There will be four different programs offered throughout 2021 to address the needs of Tarrant County residents. The goal of the diabetes education program is to positively impact participant's health and well-being through improvements in self-efficacy, self-care behaviors, and nutrition and disease management in people with type 2 diabetes to reduce their risk of complications.

The four programs that will be presented are:

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes - A 5-week series focusing on self-care and dietary management practices to improve control of type 2 diabetes. Class topics include: how food affects your blood glucose, eating the right carbohydrates, physical activity, medication and snacking.

Dinner Tonight Diabetes Cooking Schools - We'll demonstrate meals that are balanced, healthy, and can be prepared quickly at home. Spend more time together as a family-while improving your health!

Coping to Control - A 3-week program designed to empower and equip people with type 2 diabetes to effectively deal with stress. The program focuses on developing coping strategies to manage the emotional impact of diabetes self-management.

Cooking Well with Diabetes - A cooking class designed to help people with diabetes and anyone that prepares food for them. This four-lesson course includes basic nutrition education to help plan meals and prepare food for people living with diabetes. Find quick dinner ideas and gain access to 25+ recipes that will help you cook well with diabetes. Class topics include: carbohydrate foods, healthy fats, healthy side dishes and celebrating sensibly.

Health Tip: Sleep loss can make it harder to manage your blood sugar, and when you are sleep deprived you will tend to eat more and prefer high-fat, high-sugar food. Aim for 7 to 8 hours per night to guard against mindless eating.





# Maintain No Gain

Fralonda Aubrey, County Extension Agent,  
Family & Community Health

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health units from Tarrant, Lamar, and Rockwall counties joined together to offer Northeast Texans a program to support efforts to combat excess weight gain over the 2020 holiday season. The team implemented a program titled Maintain No Gain over a period of seven weeks starting October 26 through December 7, 2020. The mission of the Maintain No Gain program is to encourage participants to gain no more than two pounds over the course of the holiday season. With Microsoft Teams, we created a virtual support group for participants to attend weekly sessions, chat, and share experiences throughout the course of the program. 40 participants registered to be a part of the program, and 33 participants were Tarrant County citizens. All registered participants received weekly updates on weight management, health, workout videos, and healthy recipes.

100%

of participants reported no weight gain over a 7-week period

88%

of participants reported participation in moderate to vigorous physical

## Social Support while Social Distancing

Tis' the season to stay 6 feet away from others and protect yourself. During our time of togetherness, we have had to make some changes to our definition of socializing.

Social Support refers to how a person's relationships function. Social support is a particular behavior that provides an individual with care in a time of need. A strong social network can be highly beneficial for our most vulnerable populations during the pandemic. Strong social networks have been shown to decrease poor sleeping habits, reduce anxiety and stress, reduce loneliness and depression, and increase healthy lifestyle choices.

## HOW TO PROVIDE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY SOCIAL SUPPORT AT A DISTANCE

Emotional Support	Instrumental Support	Informational Support	Appraisal Support
Call or Video Chat to actively listen to a loved one	Offer aid and/or service for someone in need. Try cooking a dish or order a healthy meal, clean, shop, or yard work.	Offer advice or information only when asked. Share similar experiences and positive coping strategies.	Remind friends and family members of their good qualities and talents.

Reference: [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7500407/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7500407/)



# New Year, New Healthier You

Tiffany Lankford, Extension Agent, Better Living for Texans

Many people enjoy the holidays but regret the after-effects when looking at their post-holiday waistlines. It's easy to take in a few extra calories during the holidays. A small snack here and another there, combined with a large dinner and dessert, can add up to a few extra pounds.

Fortunately, there are things we can do to discipline ourselves during the holidays. A good strategy to prevent overeating is to have a wholesome breakfast and lunch before the main meal.

Want to learn more about staying healthy and reaching your goals? Check out our upcoming lesson series called "A Fresh Start to a Healthier You." It is a 4-week self-paced online series that you can complete when it is convenient for you! Our next series starts February 1<sup>st</sup>!

To register please email [tiffany.lankford@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:tiffany.lankford@ag.tamu.edu).

## Recipe of the Month! Texas Two-Step Chicken

### Ingredients:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1½ cups picante sauce
- 1½ tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 cups cooked brown rice

### What to do:

1. Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.
2. Preheat oven to 400°F.
3. Place chicken in 2-quart shallow baking dish.
4. Mix picante sauce, sugar, and mustard. Pour over chicken.
5. Bake in oven for 20-45 minutes or until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.
6. Serve chicken with rice.

**Nutrients Per Serving:** 330 calories, 4 g total fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 29 g protein, 47 g carbohydrates, 2 g dietary fiber, 8 g total sugars, 0 g added sugar, and 580 mg sodium

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP.

