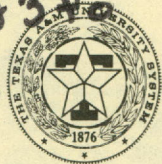


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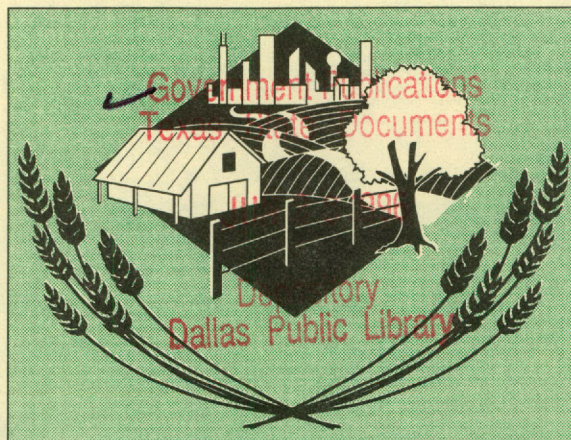


Texas Agricultural Extension Service

The Texas A&M University System

The AgriFood Master

Teaching the Foundation of the Nation



Vol. 2, No. 2 The Statewide Newsletter of the Texas AgriFood Master (TAM) Program

Summer '96

What County Agents Are Saying about TAM

"We started with a crops committee issue of how do we reach urban audiences so that they gain an understanding of what's happening on the farm?"

I see it (the AgriFood Education Council) as a vehicle to involve some segments of the AgriFood industry in our program that we've never been able to do before."

Robert Devin
CEA-Ag, Randall County

You Can Access New TAM Program Management Guides

The Texas AgriFood Master Management Guide and Tool Chest are now available on the World Wide Web. Both of these documents outline the TAM program and explain its implementation into a county program. Program management guides have been sent to urban Extension faculty across the state to introduce the program and detail its development. These can be accessed electronically through the Department of Agricultural Communications' home page. The World Wide Web addresses are:

<http://agcomwww.tamu.edu/agcom/publish/extpubs/comdev/b-6021.pdf>
and

<http://agcomwww.tamu.edu/agcom/publish/extpubs/comdev/b-6022.pdf>

The Natural Attraction to Volunteerism

"Is the correct word . . . gemeinschaft?" asks Dan Jackson, doctoral student in AGED at Texas A&M, during a discussion about Texas AgriFood Master volunteerism. Who knows! What's important is, they keep coming. In "A Field of Dreams" the spirit commanded, "If you build it, they will come." That's in reference to the baseball diamond in a cornfield. And yes, they came, many of them, those that held the spirit of the game, those with a bond, a kinship, a mutual tradition.

Vernell Burch (TAM II San Antonio, 1992) asked, "Wouldn't it be great if there was a grassroots organization of concerned people who accentuate the positive aspects of agriculture and teach consumers and youths about today's food and fiber system?"

Lynda Homer (TAM VI San Antonio, 1994) said, "I think we all have experiences in our lives that bring us back to our spiritual or emotional being. I realized that the agricultural link was missing in my life."

Some may call this human attraction a characteristic of their heritage, others an intrinsic value, but never this word gemeinschaft?

Just what is it that has encouraged more than 300 Texans to become Extension volunteers in the Texas AgriFood Master Program? What is it that draws folks from the city and the farm together for an eight-week, 32-hour TAM course of study? What is it that motivates hundreds of TAM volunteers in Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, Amarillo/Canyon and Ft. Worth to feature AgFairs on elementary school campuses, speak to neighborhood associations about agriculture and publish and distribute urban agricultural educational information?

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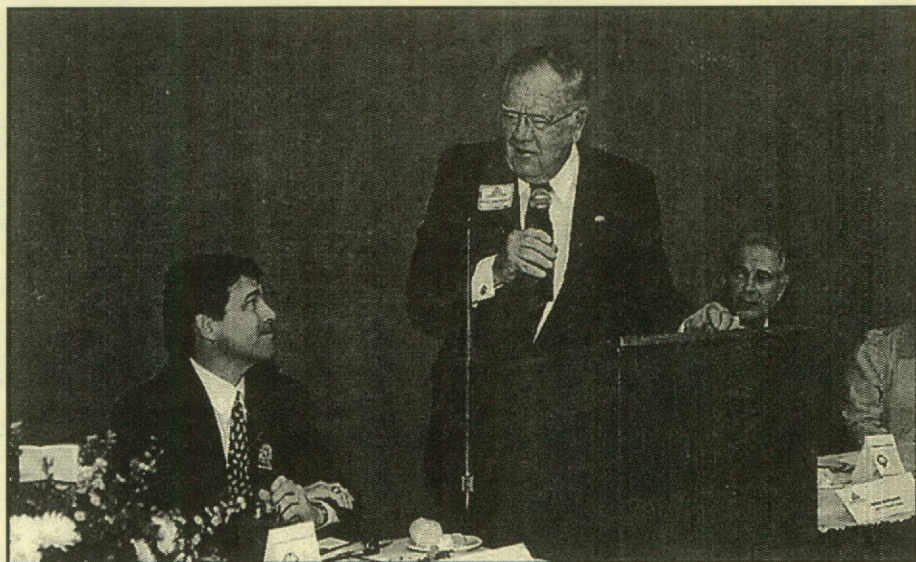


The Reverend LeRoy White (TAM II) was the creative mind and driving force in organizing the "Plant the Seed" project in Dallas. He envisions this garden bringing communities together and strengthening neighborhood relationships.

Kudos to the San Antonio Livestock Exposition

Congratulations to the San Antonio Livestock Exposition (SALE) on a successful new venture, the "Livestock Centers." Four 2,000+ square foot hands-on educational classrooms featuring beef, swine, sheep, goats and dairy production along with products and by-products for the consumer were a major attraction to most of the more than 800,000 visitors to this year's 15-day event. The new SALE Livestock Classroom Committee and industry professionals equipped the classrooms with materials and trained dozens of volunteers as resource persons in each center.

The centers represent another one of the urban-awareness programs initiated by livestock expositions in Texas. Fairs, rodeos and livestock expositions in Houston, Dallas, Ft. Worth, El Paso, Austin, Abilene, Amarillo, Waco, Harlingen and elsewhere have become



AgriFood Education Council Chairman Dolph Briscoe (standing) and Texas Agriculture Commissioner Rick Perry (left) announce the \$4.9 billion economic impact from agribusiness in Bexar County during the San Antonio Livestock Exposition

the agricultural showcase to urban audiences. These events are taking serious measures with their opportunity

to enhance consumer perceptions about agriculture. Kudos to those who make these events what they are!

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Susan Battarbee (TAM III Dallas, 1995) said, "I grew up in the city but spent time at my grandfather's ranch."

Only about a quarter of the Texas AgriFood Master volunteers claim any current connection with agriculture or agribusiness. The others come from all walks of life and a variety of professions. What they have in common is a desire to present a balanced view of modern-day agriculture.

What is it that attracts Texas AgriFood Masters? Is it heritage? Heritage, in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary is defined as: "property that descends to an heir, something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth (a thing), something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor."

It may not be heritage that attracts TAM volunteers or any volunteer for that matter. It must be a deeper individual feeling, an intrinsic value, a kinship to the land, the past, your family's roots.

Or could the natural attraction be, according to Webster's *Gemeinschaft*, "a spontaneously arising organic social relationship characterized by strong reciprocal bonds of sentiment and

kinship within a common tradition." *Gemeinschaft* may also be the human characteristic that leads people to philanthropy or organizational success as well as volunteerism.

Agent Workshop Set for November at T Bar M Resort

County Extension agents in Texas and throughout the Southern Region will have the opportunity to participate in the first AgriFood Master Program Workshop for Extension professionals November 19-21, 1996.

Kyle L. Smith, assistant director for agriculture and natural resources, announced that Extension faculty in Texas will receive a stipend to offset travel and other workshop expenses. Smith added that Extension has the opportunity to address the urban educational needs in environmental, food, health and agriculturally related subject matter areas, and that the

AgriFood Master Program has been successful in accomplishing Extension initiatives.

Objectives for the workshop are to assist county Extension faculty:

- learn about the TAM program and its volunteer recruitment, training and delivery method.
- enhance agricultural visibility in support of the food and fiber industry in urban areas.
- expand the educational outreach of Extension through a trained corps of TAM volunteers.
- foster new professional relationships, access available local resources and create networking opportunities through an AgriFood Education Council.

The Workshop Planning Committee has reserved the T Bar M Resort in New Braunfels, Texas, between Austin and San Antonio, as the site for the fall event. The committee seeks 20 Texas agents and five agents from throughout

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The AgriFood Master
courtesy of First State Bank of Uvalde, Texas

the Southern Region as participants. For workshop information, contact Andy Vestal at 409-862-3013 or t-vestal@tamu.edu.

TAM Targets Extension Initiatives

Five of 11 key initiatives in the 1995-99 Extension long-range program are the main thrust to TAM educational outreach. These initiatives, identified by more than 10,000 community leaders across the state are:

Building Leadership

Two components of the TAM program involve leadership development. Key community leaders and industry executives join Extension faculty to form a grassroots organization called the AgriFood Education Council. The council provides direction, finance, visibility and credibility to the TAM program and Extension. Texas AgriFood Master volunteers form working groups and practice their leadership skills to perform educational outreach in the areas of curriculum enrichment, industry relations, public speaking and news media relations.

Competitiveness and Sustainability for Texas Agriculture

Texas AgriFood Masters target non-farm adult and youth audiences about production, technology and natural resources management to broaden public perception.

Environmental Public Issues Education

Texas AgriFood Masters provide educational programs for consumer audiences to improve public awareness and knowledge so they have the basis for individual perceptions about environmental and agricultural issues and policies.

Natural Resources, Environmental and Land Stewardship

Integrated Pest Management; water conservation; watershed management; and forest, wildlife and grazing land management are communicated by Texas AgriFood Master volunteers.

Health and Safety of Texans

Texas AgriFood Masters focus on adult groups and media contacts with educational events concerning the health and safety of our food supply.

TAM Around Texas

Panhandle Area—TAM numbers grew to 36 with the graduation of 10 new TAM volunteers on April 29. "The big thing, so far, is that we have attracted very young people. . . kinda in their first job out of college," says Randall County Extension Agent Robert Devin. New TAM's come from a diversity of professions, for example, a teacher with Hereford schools and staff from the American Quarter Horse Association in Amarillo.

Capital Area—"It's one of those things that's pretty exciting," says Denise Rhodes (TAM I, 1994) about the "Howdy Barn." The volunteers expanded the "Howdy Barn" from 300 in '95 to more than 1,000 third graders during the '96 Austin-Travis County Livestock Show in March. This is the second year of the "Howdy" program, which introduces young people and teachers to many facets of the food and fiber industry through a series of educational exhibits and barn tours. The event has created an industry partnership to enhance urban awareness and understanding of agriculture. Thirteen schools including 40 third grade teachers completed the "Howdy Barn" expo, but just as important, they received educational curriculum to keep agriculture a part of the entire third grade experience.

Dallas Area—More than 1,100 Aiken Elementary (Richardson ISD) and San Jacinto Elementary (DISD) students participated in this spring's AgFair events sponsored by Dallas area TAM's. Dallas County Extension agent Jeff Goodwin also reports the successful first planting event of the "Plant the Seed" project in South Dallas. The Reverend LeRoy White (TAM II) recruited 25 volunteers to introduce vegetable production on vacant lots in low-income neighborhoods as an agricultural education and community service project.

Tarrant County—John South, Tarrant County Extension agent, says TAM volunteers successfully completed ag awareness programs at four elementary schools throughout the spring. Nearly 3,000 fourth graders from all Ft. Worth ISD schools attended the May 10 "Ag in the Classroom" (AITC) farm tour at the Wayne Knox farm north of Ft. Worth. The field trip served as a hands-on and true-to-life experience and supplement to the AITC curriculum published by the Texas Farm Bureau. Dairy, cotton, beef, wheat, pesticides and other applicable stations were included on the farm tour.

San Antonio Area—Devin James, CEA in Guadalupe County, reports two "Ag Just for Kids" events this spring. Equivalent to an AgFair, these events were held in Seguin and at Samuel Clemens High School in suburban San Antonio. Bexar County AgFair events were held on four elementary school campuses this spring. Helen Holdsworth, Bexar County Extension associate, reports successful agricultural education exhibits at EARTHDAY '96 held at San Pedro Park and the Texas Children's Festival at the Institute of Texan Cultures.

Brazos Valley—A slightly new concept (Texas AggieFood Masters) has been introduced to enhance urban awareness in Brazos County. Instead of community volunteers participating in TAM training and educational projects, a class of 27 Texas A&M juniors and seniors were involved. In partnership with the Brazos County office of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and supported by the Brazos Valley AgriFood Education Council, students in AGED 489 "AgriFood Industry Leadership" successfully completed eight weeks of training, two AgFairs, two press conferences, an "Impact of Agribusiness" publication and many valuable leadership experiences. Sadly the students will not remain as Extension volunteers for Brazos County. They, however, may be the next wave of TAM volunteers when they take on new professional roles with jobs in Dallas, Austin, Ft. Worth, Amarillo, San Antonio or other cities where TAM is needed.

Children Deliver Effective Message

A speaker at a recent agricultural summit makes the following statement: "We've got to teach and reach the young people of this country about the important role that agriculture plays in their lives."

So what? We've all heard that line before. The powerful part of the comment then follows: "How many of you have young children? Will they let you start the car without buckling your seatbelt?"

The point that the speaker then makes is that we have made a tremendous impact on reducing trauma from car wrecks in this country. This has happened because we have a whole new attitude about the importance of wearing our seatbelts. Children have been instrumental in getting that message across.

The speaker then goes on to say, "My children will not let me start the car

until everyone is buckled up."

Wow! Think about it.

This seatbelt example shows us how the messages from agriculturalists must be absorbed by the consumer to be effective. Messages that are driven home by the hand of a small child, are never forgotten.

This type of child-driven message can have a profound impact on present and future adults.

Jeff Goodwin

"People Say the Darndest Things"

"You never really understand someone until you consider things from their point of view.

Attorney Atticus Finch in
Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird

The TAM Mission. . .

. . .to recruit and train urban volunteers to provide agricultural, natural resources, biotechnology, food and environmental education for consumer and youth audiences to ensure wise decisions are made about America's food and fiber system.

The Texas AgriFood Master Program is sponsored by the AgriFood Education Councils of Texas, The Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System Agriculture Program and many food, fiber and forestry professionals and organizations.

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Educational programs of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin.



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