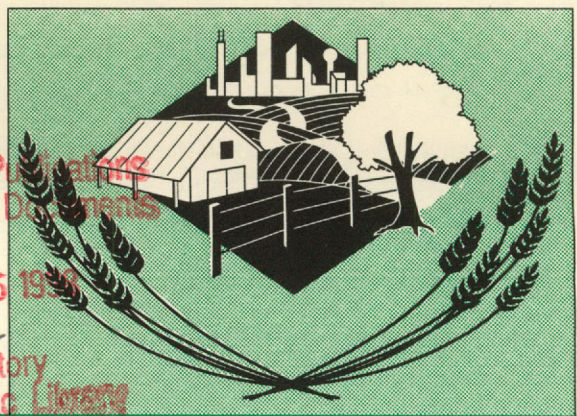


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Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System



The AgriFood Master

Teaching the Foundation of the Nation

Vol. 3, No. 4 The Statewide Newsletter of the Texas AgriFood Master (TAM) Program Winter '98

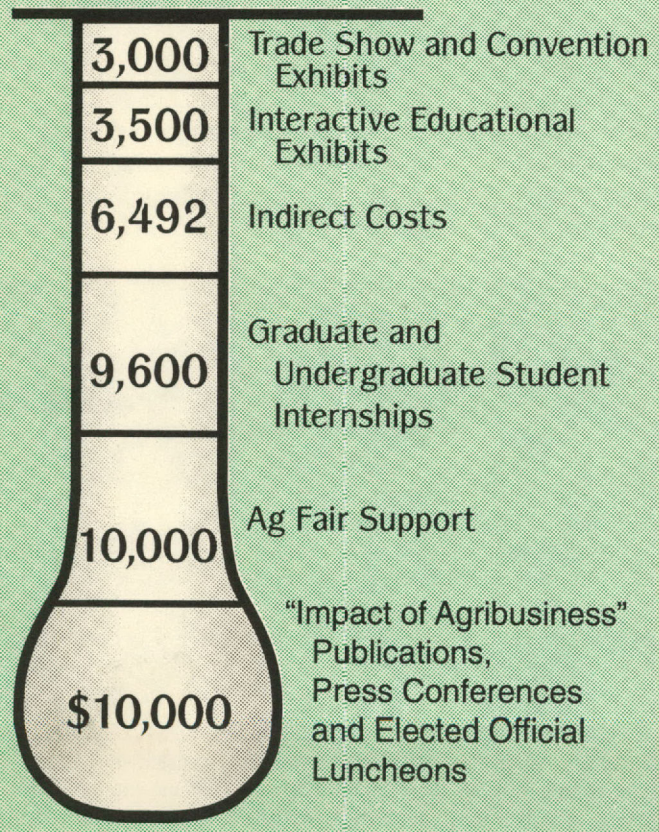
Agribusiness Support Needed

This year, the Texas AgriFood Master program is requesting more than \$40,000 from our agribusiness partners which will enable us to do more than we have done in previous years. FY '98 financial support will target urban media relations, interactive educational exhibits, college

student internships, outreach and expansion during national meetings to be held in-state and the Texas Star Farms urban agricultural theme park. Support from the agribusiness community is vital for continuing our efforts. An investment of less than one cent per child will ensure that the

AgriFood Masters program will continue providing leadership for Texas agriculture. To contribute to the 1998 Gift Campaign, please fill out the following form and return it to T. A. "Andy" Vestal, 107 Scoates Building, College Station, TX 77843-2116.

\$42,592 FY 1998 Gift Campaign Goal



Yes, I want to contribute to the FY '98 TAM Gift Campaign!

To join your agribusiness peers in support of urban education about agriculture, complete and return this form.

- \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 Other
- Please send me additional TAM program expansion information (contributor's packet).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

For direct communications, call T. A. "Andy" Vestal at 409-862-3013

Forward your contributions to:
 FY '98 TAM Gift Campaign,
 Texas Agricultural Extension Service
 attention: T. A. "Andy" Vestal
 107 Scoates Building
 College Station, TX 77843-2116

Make checks payable to TAEX account 225100.

Texas AgriFood Masters Promote Texas Fibers

"The line never stopped and the kids kept coming," was how volunteers at the Kids Fair in San Antonio described the response to a new educational exhibit. The exhibit, titled "Texas Fibers: Field to Fabric," has been used at five educational events throughout Texas, with others planned in the coming months.

The interactive exhibit includes the Texas fibers backdrop with three basketball hoops set up for the games. Children are asked questions about Texas fibers; they then toss the ball into the correct hoop labeled cotton, wool or mohair. At the Kids Fair in San Antonio alone, more than 2,500 youngsters participated in the two-day event.

"It was great because you could see the kids talking about it and getting excited," said Allison Klement, TAM program assistant. "They were so anxious about getting the right answer and winning a prize that they didn't even know how much they were learning."

Thus far, volunteers have used the exhibit at ag fairs in Abilene, Austin and San Antonio. It also was displayed at the San Antonio Home and Garden Show and the Fall Garden Fair during October.

If you would like to use the exhibit at an event in your county or would like to learn how to construct a similar one of your own, please contact Andy Vestal at the Texas AgriFood Masters office at (409) 862-3013.

TAM Around Texas

Travis County—Rene Mosqueda continues to make great strides in implementing the TAM program in Travis County. The group plans to distribute 2,000 copies of its "Impact of Agribusiness" publication this winter. This publication helped develop new relationships with the agribusiness sector. Travis County also worked with the Texas Agriwomen and Travis County Farm Bureau to sponsor an ag fair event called "A Day at the Farm" in November at the Travis County Expo Center. More than 700 Austin youths participated in the event. Mosqueda also held a training session for more than 20 volunteers during October.

Wichita County—Wichita County is initiating a TAM program in the Wichita Falls area. Joe Raff expressed interest in the ag fair and impact of agribusiness activities. The Extension Program Council hosted a breakfast in October to meet with Andy Vestal to review opportunities and consider events for 1998.

Bexar County—Texas Star Farms is moving along with the help of the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Texas A&M. Students in two courses are engaged in irrigation and water conservation projects in cooperation with Texas Star Farms. Dr. Bruce Lesikar and Dr. Wayne Laporri are the academic coordinators for the classes. Texas Star Farms also was mentioned for its innovative programming at the Galaxy Conference in Cincinnati. This

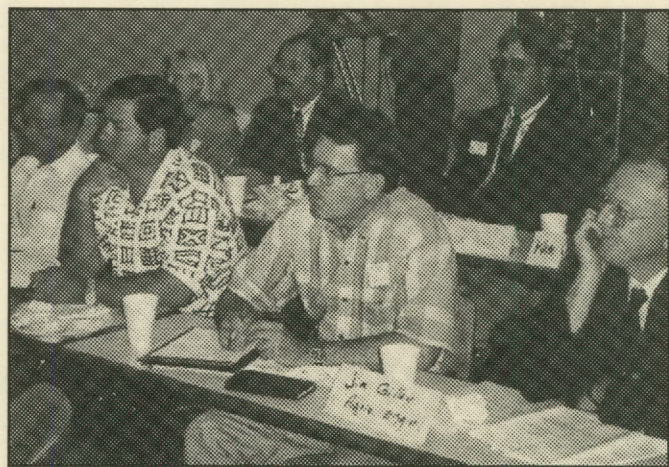
was a national conference held for Extension professionals from across the nation. The Bexar County AgriFood Masters also used the Texas fibers exhibit at the San Antonio Home and Garden Show and the Fall Garden Fair in October. The group hosted two ag fairs for San Antonio ISD this fall—one at Woodlawn Hills Elementary and the other at Bowden Elementary. More than 400 fourth-graders were involved in these two events.

Dallas County—Eight Dallas County TAM volunteers spent four weeks at the State Fair of Texas working in the Texas Beef Council exhibit. They were trained by the Texas Beef Council during September. Now they are collaborating with Dr. David Marshall of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in engineering a grain industry exhibit. They have also visited with Neiman-Marcus about possibly sponsoring a Texas fibers exhibit for the county. Ag fairs were held at Rinehart Elementary and at Dealey Montessori School in November. Training for new volunteers will begin in January or February.

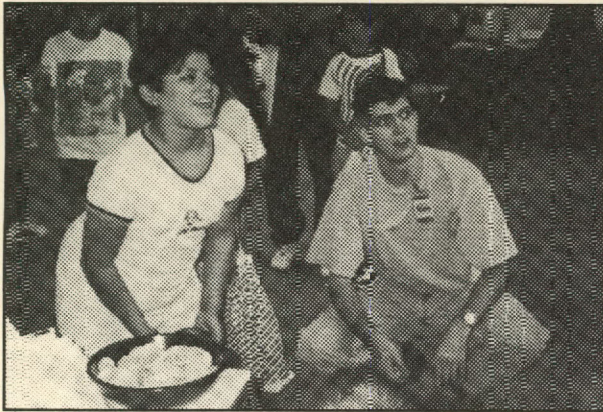
Brazos County—The Brazos Valley AgriFood Education Council is planning a county-wide event to be held in April. It will include

agribusiness tours, an ag fair for about 1,500 students and a pre-school youth educational area for parents and children. The exposition also will provide continuing education credits for area producers. This is a great opportunity for Extension to interpret programming efforts to both urban and rural people at the same location on the same day.

Tom Green County—County Extension Agent Jeff Ripley says the Agribusiness Council has raised more than \$5,000 to fund an "Impact of Agribusiness" publication. Also, the Concho Valley Agribusiness Council has held a series of ag leadership activities. In December, the third session was held which focused on ag awareness events and the interdependency of urban and rural audiences titled "How to Interpret Ag to the Public."



Meeting of the minds—Department heads and Extension specialists met in June with the Bexar County Extension staff and supporters to discuss activities and programming possibilities of the Texas Star Farms.

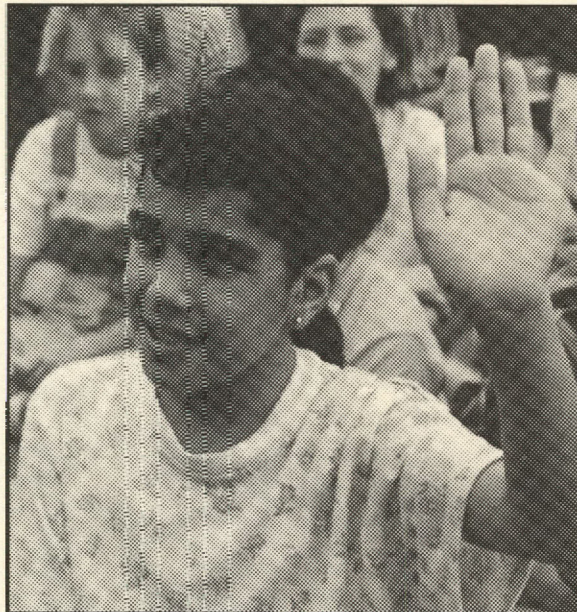


hoop it up—Bexar County intern J. W. Washington (right) assists with the Texas fibers display at the Kids Fair in San Antonio. More than 2,500 rural and urban youths participated in the basketball game exhibit.

county Extension agents encouraging them to become part of an ag awareness network throughout Texas. The network would provide linkages to all agents across the state with like interests so they can share outstanding ideas, models and lesson plans through a list-serve. If you would like to request, share or communicate ideas and materials, please contact the College Station TAM office at (409) 862-3013.

Rio Grande Valley—Jason Johnson, Extension economist, completed a rough draft including tables and graphics for an "Impact of Agribusiness" publication for the four-county region. County Extension agents Enrique Perez (Starr), Luis Saldana (Willacy), Terry Lockamy (Cameron) and Brad Cowen (Hidalgo) are critiquing, editing and making suggestions for photo ideas for the publication. After they complete this stage, the publication will be ready to go to press. According to Johnson, the agribusiness community is very excited about the project, and leadership from the county Extension agents has been a key component in completing the project.

To subscribe, send an e-mail message to majordomo@taex001.tamu.edu and instructions will follow.



Eager beavers—A student from Rock Prairie Elementary eagerly anticipates the answer to her many agricultural questions at the College Station ag fair held earlier this year.

State-wide—In October, an e-mail message was sent to all

FY 1997 Gift Campaign Financial Report

As the fiscal year begins, so does the quest to fund the educational efforts of Texas AgriFood Masters. The FY '97 gift campaign was a huge success with agribusinesses across the state contributing more than \$12,000 to support programming efforts. With those funds, 300 TAM volunteers reached urban citizens statewide through various programs and outreach such as a three-day program expansion workshop for 29 urban Extension agents from Texas and three other states; ag fair events in more than 30 counties; "Impact of Agribusiness" publications; and elected official luncheons in Austin, San Antonio, Ft. Worth, San Angelo and the Rio Grande Valley. We would like to thank the benefactors listed to the right for their generous support of the Texas AgriFood Master program.

1997 Financial Partners

\$1,000 or more

San Antonio Area AFEC
Uvalde State Bank
Brazos County AFEC
Farm Credit Banks of Texas
McCombs Foundation
Texas Seed Trade Association

\$500-\$999

Pogue Seed Company
Stumberg Foundation

\$101-\$499

Brazos Hay Producers
Texas Broiler Council
Texas Egg Council
Texas Poultry Improvement Center
Texas Poultry Federation
Texas Turkey Federation

\$100 or less

Callahan County Farmers Coop
Mr. and Mrs. J. Neal Pratt
Louise Box Hutchison
John T. Schmuecke

Total \$12,213.40

Funds were utilized for the following expenditures:

Total Expenses

September 1, 1996-
August 31, 1997

Internships	\$ 3,169.57
Copies and photographic services	\$ 2,061.20
Travel	\$ 1,742.72
Supplies	\$ 1,669.05
Postage	\$ 1,374.36
Printing	\$ 1,092.60
Indirect costs	\$ 876.00
Texas A&M Foundation fee	\$ 215.00
Meals for volunteers and program asst.	\$ 191.32
Computing and Information Services	\$ 74.00
Total Expenses	\$ 12,465.82

**Special Thanks to our
1997 Newsletter Sponsors**

First State Bank of Uvalde — postage
GE Pogue Seed Company of Kenedy — printing



The AgriFood Master

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Texas AgriFood Masters Address Biotechnology

Biotechnology has become a major buzzword of the 1990s. Innovations and advances in the biotech realm are influencing all aspects of agriculture, medicine and the environment. The challenge is to educate consumers so they can make wise decisions about rejecting or accepting biotechnology practices.

Biotechnology is part of the core curriculum for TAM training. New information, however, is accumulating so quickly, it makes it difficult to keep up with the biotech industry. Texas AgriFood Masters are taking steps to ensure that the public receives accurate, reliable and up-to-date information.

What began as an AGED 489 project has led to a wide array of educational arenas for the TAM program. T. A. "Andy" Vestal is currently doing his doctoral research on the knowledge and attitudes of news journalists who frame the biotech information on which consumers base their buying decisions. The study, which will begin in January, will involve journalists from across the nation.

Andy Vestal and Allison Klement made the presentation at several educational events, including the Biotech Teacher Enhancement workshop, two sections of Dr. Joe Townsend's AGLS 101 class and the student teaching block at Texas A&M. By "educating the educators," we can help people to understand biotechnology and other innovative agricultural practices.

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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