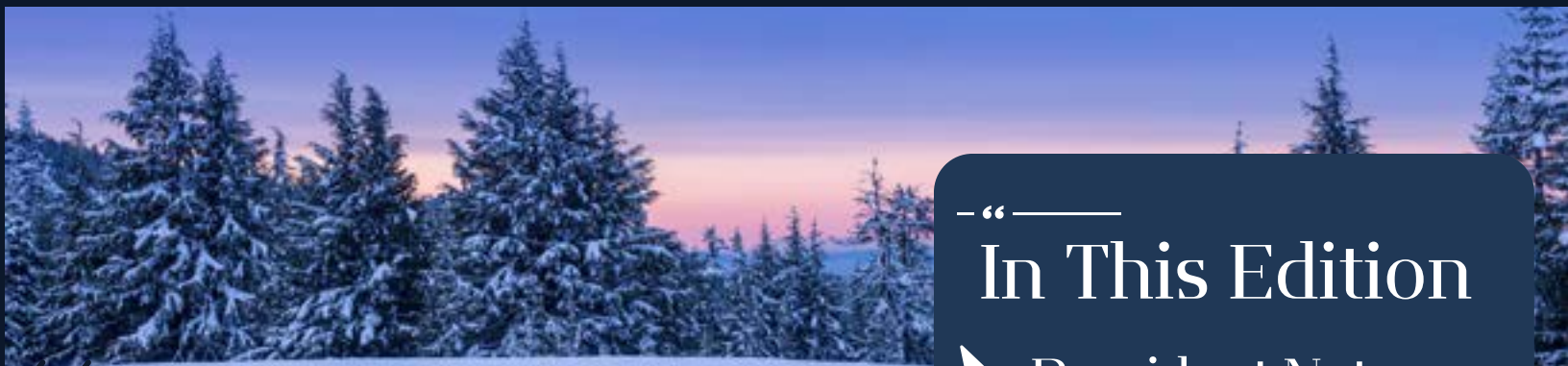


Winter 2024 Edition

# TEXAS EXTRA

Texas Extension Association of Family  
and Consumer Sciences



“

## President's Note

Happy New Year! I hope you were able to take some time off throughout the Christmas and New Year holiday to spend time with family and friends. This time of year provides us the opportunity to reflect, recharge, and think about changes (difference, improvements, goals) we want to make in the new year, personally and professionally.

This year has had a fast start, and although I have put some thought into changes I would like to make both personally and professionally, they are not completely in place. Yet!. So, if you are like me, I encourage you to take some time to consider what you want for 2024.

Reflecting on our accomplishments helps us to identify areas where we would like to improve and set our sights on new goals. Take time when needed to recharge yourself and prioritize self-care. Taking care of ourselves helps to increase our productivity and provides us the ability to serve our communities and our families better. Envisioning those goals and making positive changes towards them will not only benefit us but our county programs as well.

## In This Edition

- ▶ President Note
- ▶ District Happenings
- ▶ Dates to Remember

Our commitment to continuous learning benefits us and the clientele we serve daily. As a professional association we are here to support and empower one another and provide guidance to those we come in contact with so that we can continue to serve and help improve the lives of individuals, families and communities. Thank you for being a part of this community of remarkable educators.

I look forward to working alongside each of you in 2024.

*Norma Munoz*



# District 1 Happenings....



Three days in November Agents and Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors did food demonstration using Dinner Tonight Recipes at the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension FCH Agents from Briscoe, Carson, Gray, Wheeler, Potter, Randall, Oldham, Hutchinson, Armstrong, Deaf Smith, Sherman and Hemphill Counties led the Dinner Tonight food demonstrations. These youth and agents did an amazing job teaching the audience about the nutrition of the dish they prepared, proper food handling, and food storage.

# District 2 Happenings....



## A Stitch in Time Seasonal Project Nicole Singleton, Dawson County



Dawson County has been promoting mental health and creativity through a series of sewing projects, entitled “A Stitch in Time”. Community members enjoyed learning how to sew, sharing stories, and laughter. In October and November, they made fabric pumpkins, and fall themed breadbasket napkins. In December, they made Christmas garlands and holiday wreath pillows. Attendees have expressed gratitude for opportunities to get out of the house for a morning of fun, socialization, and cute “take-home” projects.



## Jingle and Mingle Holiday Program Garza, Scurry, Lynn and Borden Counties



Jingle & Mingle was a fun holiday program conducted by Xane Reiter (Garza County), Ronda White (Scurry County), Kaci Scott (Lynn County), and Julie Smith (Borden County). The FCH agent team worked together to host the workshop in each of their prospective counties, conducting the interactive workshop four times. The program included tips for hosting holiday gatherings on a budget, preparing different types of charcuterie and food boards, along with the importance of food safety. Other topics included holiday family activities, and gifting food items. The team educated **over 100 participants** between the four programs.

# District 2 Happenings....



## **Fresh Start Kress High School Calley Runnels, Swisher County**

Seventeen Kress High School Seniors in Swisher County completed the Fresh Start to a Healthier You series. In addition to learning about MyPlate, food safety, and meal planning, students evaluated the amount of sugar in drinks and snack foods. Additionally, they made educational posters about what they had learned. These posters were displayed throughout the school.

## **Holiday in a Jar**

Felice Acker (Castro),  
Kathy Lostroh (Lamb),  
Courtney Lowe (Hale,  
Lamb & Castro), and  
Wendy Case (Parmer)



**Holiday in a Jar** was a multi-county program offering education on how to gift food in jars safely and effectively. The participants also learned ways to wrap the jars with tags and bags. Additionally, agents discussed the multiple ways the recipes could be used during the holidays and other busy seasons of the year. The program was conducted in Castro, Lamb, and Parmer Counties over three days during the lunch hour. Over 60 people attended the fun holiday programs.

# District 4 Happenings....

## **LET'S GET COOKIN'**

BETHANY ARIE  
FANNIN COUNTY

Let's Get Cookin', is a Food Challenge Contest designed to get Fannin County youth interested in 4-H and the food and nutrition project. It was held during the Fannin County Fair in October.

The Contest was set up as an introductory food challenge contest and was open to all 4-H age youth who lived in or attended school in the county.

The community has really gotten behind the contest and a local restaurant sponsored ingredients as well as assisted with hosting duties. Master Wellness Volunteers, PAC Members, and various community leaders assisted with judging and contest management.

There were 121 participants in this year's contest and a great time was had by all. Let's Get cooking has been a fun addition to the County Fair and provides an opportunity for more youth to have a part in the County Fair!



# District 4 Happenings....

## Brain Health Seminar

LIZ ESPIE  
DALLAS COUNTY

In November, Dallas County agent, Liz Espie, was a presenter at the Brain Health Seminar II. Liz presented “Healthy Living for your Brain and Body” with volunteers from Dallas and Northeast Texas Alzheimer’s Association.

The educational information was combined with cooking demonstrations highlighting recipes from the Mediterranean diet. Studies have linked the Mediterranean diet with lower risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure and slower cognitive decline.

250 participants (caregivers and those living with Alzheimer’s) attended this event. Presentations covered a variety of topics including Ballet for Your Brain and Balance, Healthy Sleeping Habits for Seniors, Hearing and Cognition, and Importance of Early Detection.



# District 5 Happenings....



**Cherokee County** held their first Matter of Balance Class with nine completing the eight week program. They learned that one of their worst trip hazards was right under most of their feet in their own homes...Rugs!.

**Amy Walley, Cherokee County FCH agent,** and volunteers did some gardening with Alto ISD Life Skills Class, as well as the Pre-K and Kindergarten classes. They found out they aren't so fond of radishes but love the kale!



# District 5 Happenings....

**Panola County hosts a monthly Cookin' Night for 4-H members** to brush up on their kitchen skills and knowledge. We usually try to focus on a specific skill using lessons from the Explore Guide, but decided to mix it up and have some fun this December. We made two different batches of Monster Cookies- one straight from the recipe and one using some healthy substitutions! The younger kids followed the recipe exactly and the older group substituted whole wheat flour for the white flour and avocado for the butter. Interestingly enough, you couldn't taste the avocado but you could taste the whole wheat flour. These cookies also didn't flatten out as much during baking. The healthier cookies turned out very good, but most kids still preferred the traditional recipe. Oh well, I tried!

**-Clarissa Moon, CEA-FCH, Panola County**





# District 6 Happenings....



## **Cooking Well with Diabetes** Leslie King, CEA-FCH, Val Verde

In August, Cooking Well with Diabetes was offered to Del Rio Housing Authority residents, free of charge. This was made possible through the generous sponsorship by the Community Health Improvement Coalition (CHIC), an organization that manages funds for the majority of grassroots health committees in Del Rio, TX. This year's class reached maximum capacity attendance, and was of great benefit to residents from the Chihuahua housing sector. Participants learned diabetes specific nutrition education and received hands on learning experiences through group cooking classes. County Agent, Leslie King, would like to thank their partners: Del Rio Housing Authority, CHIC, and the Wesley nurse from Methodist Health Ministries, Jackie Hernandez, for their cooperation in helping make this class a success. Cooking Well with Diabetes will be taught for a third consecutive year in 2024, by popular demand.



## **Mental Health Education and Resource Fair** Angelee Shamaley, CEA-FCH, El Paso

Minority Mental Health Month is an annual observance in July that aims to raise awareness and address the mental health needs of racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. According to the Office of Minority Health (OMH), these groups often face barriers to accessing quality mental health care, such as stigma, discrimination, lack of cultural competence, and language barriers. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family & Community Health Agent and Emergence Health Network collaboration held a health education and resource fair on July 26, 2023. The event was held at Wellington Chew senior center. The event opened with an education presentation by the agent on Depression and Older Adults. Followed were brief mental health topics presented by Emergence Health Network and Molina Healthcare. The presentation session was wrapped up with a prayer from the local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) chapter representative. A total of 43 adults attended the presentations. Subsequently they were able to meet with organizations and learn about various mental health resources available in their community. Local organizations hosting resource information tables included 6 partners (Emergence Health Network, LIVE Active, Molina Healthcare, NAMI, Aliviane, & Be Well). A chair yoga session wrapped up the event hosted by Selflove Wellness Yoga.

# District 6 Happenings....



## **West Texas Childcare Providers Conference**

Agents: Haley Cowley, Rebecca Taylor, Leslie King, Amber Lambright, Amber Kendrick, Abigail Pritchard, Krista Chin, & Casey McPherson

RPL: Stacy Drury



The West Texas Childcare Providers Conference was held on Saturday, October 28, 2023, at Gulf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland, Texas. This multi-county event was hosted by County Extension and Health Agents of Andrews, Crockett, Crane/Upton/Midland, Dawson/Martin, Ector/Midland, Howard, Ward, and Val Verde. Our Keynote speaker was Miquela Smith, Extension Programming Specialist II Disaster Recovery Unit. She led a discussion on workers self-care, providing the forty-nine participants with tools on how to destress through different techniques such as laughter or just taking a deep breath while stepping away from a stressful moment. Early Childhood Professional Development Project Specialist Alexis Cordova, spoke on how outdoor play is more than just recess, that studies are showing that children are learning more when they are using all their senses and given the opportunity to think outside the box. After our two main speakers, we transitioned into breakout sessions that covered the following topics, Mindfulness in Action and Task Triage: Time & Stress Management provide by Dawson/ Martin Health Agent Amber Kendrick and Ector/ Midland Family & Community Health Agent Abigail Pritchard.



There was also a session provided for just the directors entitled Understanding Corporate Cultures provided by Mel Mosier, Director of Midland Human Resource Urban Transit Division. Each of the participants left the event with a swag bag and 6 CEUs needed for their Continued Education.



# District 8 Happenings....

## Historic Eastland County Pecan Pie & Delicacies Contest

Historic Eastland County Pecan Pie & Delicacies Contest held Dec. 1 is growing. Eastland County has held a Pecan Show each Dec. 1 for decades and the Pecan Pie Contest has been a tradition that goes along side it. As pecans are being judged in the Courthouse so are many pecan pies and pecan sweets. This showcase on the ag commodity of pecans is not unique to Eastland County, but continues a historic feature on a favorite Texas nut used in many recipes. Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Agent, Amy O'Brien-Glenn brought back the Pecan Pie Contest 3 years ago, after it had fizzled out during times of transition and change with TEEA clubs, and staff changes. "When I realized there was not a pecan pie contest anymore, I made a few calls and we were back in business.", said Amy. Everyone looks forward to this day. This December over 12 TEEA members of the Morton Valley Club along with the Agent promoted, recruited judges, presented ribbons, and sold the baked good in the Eastland County Courthouse. Over \$200 dollars was raised to go to 4-H scholarships in the county. Most importantly, it is a well honored tradition in Eastland County, the community, and Texas A & M AgriLife Extension. Some traditions we must keep alive.



Submitted by Amy O'Brien-Glenn



Navarro County Tamale Class

"We all learned how to cook the meat, make the chili puree, mix the masa and fill and roll tamales. It was hands on and I divided them into groups and each group made their masa and filled and rolled their own tamales to cook. We all enjoyed a lunch of tamales, chili, beans, salad and chips and salsa that was prepared ahead of time. Andrew Lewis assisted with the class and prepared the beans. Maricella Rojas, my FCH committee member led the class."

Submitted by Lorie Stovall



# District 9 Happenings....

## **AGING MY WAY ANNUAL SENIOR EVENT BY SONJA DAVIS, FCH AGENT- HARRIS COUNTY**

The Harris FCH Program Area Committee, the Harris County FCH, and BLT agents and interns held their 4th annual senior event. The 2024 theme was “Aging My Way”. The annual event is designed to be both educational and entertaining to seniors as they approach the holidays. Educational presentations included: artificial Intelligence, common scams that target seniors, brain and body health, Medicare 101, decluttering, mindfulness, and container gardening. The entertainment included a comic show by Karen Williams, who retired after 36 years as an EFNEP educator, line dancing, and frame decorating. Approximately 95 participants, volunteers, and vendors attended the event.



## **ROOTED IN HEALTH- IT'S OUR NATURE! BY CAROLINE CRUZ, FCH AGENT-MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

We know that time spent in nature is beneficial for our physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing. Medical research shows that exposure to nature can help us heal quicker after surgery, lessen the need for pain medications, and helps babies and children develop motor skills and confidence in problem solving. But how often do we include nature in our daily lives? For these reasons, the Montgomery County Nature for Health Task Force was created! Our first big event was the “Rooted In Health, Nurtured By Nature Health and Wellness Event” at the W.G. Jones State Forest. This free event offered ‘Walk With A Doc’ walks led by physicians and forest therapy mini walks led by forest therapy guides. Seven organizations provided education, including 4-H and HTYA. We had over 100 attendees and 200 volunteer hours. We hope to offer this event each year. Also new this year was a series called “It’s In Our Nature”, which was taught at Lone Star College’s Academy for Lifelong Learning. This 4-class series taught the benefits on nature on our health and included visits to 3 nearby parks or natural places for outdoor walking.



# District 9 Happenings....

## **GET A TASTE FOR REDUCING FOOD WASTE BY CELESTE FEAST, BLT AGENT -FORT BEND COUNTY**

This program was conducted at the UT Physician Multispecialty Site which consists of a classroom and full kitchen setup. UT Physician clients are encouraged to attend programming that will enhance their lives through health and wellness information. The class attendance for the 4-part series ranged from 5 participants to 11 in total. In Session 1, I presented the What and Why About Food Waste, then we looked at how much food is wasted in the entire food supply chain and in our homes. We also discussed why we need to reduce food waste. Those reasons include wasted natural resources, wasted opportunity to feed hungry people, landfill pollution, and how wasted food equals wasted money. Participants were given a homework assignment to inventory their current food supply held in their freezers, refrigerators and pantries. All participants said the program was a worthwhile use of their time and that they enjoyed the program. They were more conscious of their food inventory, food waste and would compost food scraps.



## **DISTRICT 9 TEAFCS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY ANNA DURON, FCH AGENT- BRAZORIA COUNTY**

Fort Bend, Galveston and Brazoria counties planned two days of exciting activities for the District 9 October Professional Development meeting. The two-day excitement started with Cindy Bienevidez from the Craft Cake Shoppe located in Sugarland. Ms. Bienevidez shared first-hand information on the attributes needed to start your own business. She continued by explaining the financial and legal requirements of maintaining a small business. The attention then turned to the Cake Decorating Contest where participants were asked to compete with their peers and “recreate” a cake like the baking show “Nailed It!”. Julie Prouse, Extension specialist, led an eye-opening session on cottage food regulations. She broke down the complex codes, making it very understandable. The learning continued into the afternoon by creating a product that could be sold as part of a small business. The hands-on workshop was led by Fort Bend County Extension Agent, Leticia Rolland. She showed the attendees how to make two specialty bath and body products. Attendees created a bar of specialty soap and an exfoliating lip scrub.



# District 10 Happenings....

**District 10**



## **District 10 4-H Fall Roundup!**

District 10 agents were busy, busy, busy this fall getting participants ready for their county and district contests. D10 Fall Roundup was held in Kerrville and had an amazing turnout with **595** 4-H members registered from 18 different counties! Contests included Educational Presentation/Public Speaking, Livestock/Horse Quiz Bowl, FCH Quiz Bowl, Entomology Judging, Food Show and Food Challenge.



### **Congrats on a new role!**

#### **Dorothy Herbst**

Bexar County has a new Better Living for Texans Extension Agent! Dorothy has been working in Bexar Co. as the Urban Agriculture Educator and is very excited to continue working for AgriLife in her new role. Dorothy says “working with people and making a difference in their lives, especially around the topics of nutrition, health and agriculture is invaluable to me and why I find this type of work so important.”

### **Travis County - Preventing Chronic Diseases**

#### **Sonia Coyle - FCH Agent**

4+ workshops offered in English and Spanish were offered in person and virtually at various Travis County worksites & organizations. FCH agents utilized stretching bands sharing information on strength conditioning, activities to learn about kitchen gadgets, and food demonstrations to encourage healthy lifestyles. Sonia Coyle and Morgan Newton also, conducted Food & Nutrition trainings with 30 4-Hers in attendance resulting in a county contest of 9 teams!



### **Medina County - Holiday Craft Day**

#### **Elyse Hernandez - FCH Agent**

Medina county started their Thanksgiving break with a holiday craft! Youth enjoyed conversation, listening to holiday music, and made their own advent wreath, counting down the days until Christmas!

# District 10 Happenings....



## Hays County - Walk Across Texas Kate Blankenship - FCH Agent

The first Walk Across Texas Program at Tom Green Elementary in Buda! The whole school competed against each other by grade, and the 3rd grade team Yankees walked the most with 114.57 miles!!! The picture is of the Yankees team.

Total miles from the whole school=4,823  
Teachers walked= 2,454  
Students walked= 2,369

## Bexar County - Walk Across Texas Angie Gutierrez FCH Agent & Nicole Hall Wellness Coordinator

Walk Across Texas kick off for county employees! The kickoff included a Zumba demonstration. Employees enjoyed moving to a variety of music! For the midpoint event, a wellness instructor demonstrated stretching exercise to county employees, where they learned the importance of stretching to keep muscles flexible, strong and healthy. In January, there will be a celebration at commissioner's court to recognize first, second and third place teams with the most miles. Prizes and certificates will be given out.



## Bexar County - Walk N Talk Mary Masterson BLT Agent

Merry Christmas from the Enrique Barrera Senior Center! This is a fun exercise class that includes an informative nutrition component. For this week's recipe the participants enjoyed making and tasting Broccoli Cheese Soup.

# District 12 Happenings....

## Joanne Ureste-Armijo CEA - Family & Community Health Hidalgo County

The agents unified Walk Across Texas & Step Up, Scale Down programs to combine physical fitness and nutrition to help the participants move to a healthier weight and improve their health. The agent innovatively implemented a dance program to increase Walk Across Texas participants by promoting the program as Dance Across Texas. The agent was able to receive a sponsorship to provide participants with Dance Across Texas t-shirts. The results concluded that as a group, they walked a total of 5,029 miles and lost 67.1 pounds.

The Master Clothing Volunteers have continued their weekly sewing classes. In the month of October, the group constructed mastectomy pillows and donated them to Texas Oncology. During the holiday months, they sell their crafts by participating in Holiday Craft Fairs. The MCVs have partnered up with a farmer's market to sell their handmade craft to fund their retirement.

The Multi Childcare Conference was a resounding success! Cameron & Hidalgo County led a concurrent childcare conference offering an English & Spanish session. The conference provided 4 clock hours, with a total of 102 participants. 1,200 books were donated from South Texas Literacy to our Early childhood providers. Community Partnerships consisted of Superior HealthPlan, Texas Tropical Behavioral Center, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Health Solutions, Easterseals Rio Grande Valley, South Texas Literacy coalition, Master Clothing Volunteers, and Precinct 1.



Sifuentes was able to implement this program through the United ISD State and Federal Program during afterschool. This program was a great success as Sifuentes was able to introduce new fruits and vegetables as well as giving the kids opportunities to try them in different ways. Sifuentes also had the kids learn about

being physically active in different locations such as school, the park, or even at home! In one session, Sifuentes had the students dance to different upbeat songs to get them moving and show them how easy it is to be active and have fun. By the end of the program, the kids were begging Sifuentes not to go but they were also very excited to know that they finished the program and they felt very proud of their certificate of completion!



## Aileen Sifuentes EA - Better Living for Texans Webb County





# District 12 Happenings....

**Karen Cantu**  
**EA - Better Living for Texans**  
**Hidalgo County**

**Nidia Garcia**  
**EA - Better Living for Texans**  
**Cameron County**

In October, Karen Cantu and Nidia Garcia, BLT Agents collaborated to implement the A Fresh Start to a Healthier You! program in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. Their target audience was parents of Autism in My Life, an organization dedicated to supporting families with autistic children. The program was thoughtfully tailored to meet the needs of these parents by focusing on healthy, easy-to-prepare, and affordable recipes that also included allergy alternatives suitable for their children. Participants learned how to save money while grocery shopping, ensure food safety at home, and understand the importance of portion sizes and balanced meal planning. Many attendees said that they had begun making nutritious recipes, which their families and kids enjoyed very much! Additionally, one participant proudly shared that she had lost 8 pounds since the start of the program by implementing more fruits and vegetables into her meals and paying closer attention to portion sizes. Participants enjoyed the cucumber salad and black bean burger recipe demonstrations and prepared them at home.



Neida Martinez orchestrated a successful "Cooking Well for Healthy Blood Pressure" series at the Rio Grande City Public Library throughout November. The series, held on the 1st, 15th, and 29th of the month, brought together 15 enthusiastic participants eager to embrace a healthier lifestyle. The interactive sessions delved into essential skills, teaching participants how to interpret nutritional labels and prepare mouthwatering, low-sodium recipes. From Turkey Tacos and Cranberry Salsa to Black Bean and Rice Salad and Zucchini-Oat Chocolate Chip Cookies, the participants not only discovered the joy of cooking but also relished the opportunity to savor delicious dishes without compromising on health. Beyond culinary delights, the sessions fostered a sense of community, with everyone actively engaged and excited to learn more about maintaining a balanced diet. As a token of appreciation, each participant received a Healthy South Texas shopping bag—a gesture that added to the overall positive experience. Neida Martinez certainly left a lasting impact, empowering individuals to make informed choices for a heart-healthy lifestyle. The success of this series is a testament to the community's dedication to well-being and the valuable role that education plays in achieving it.



**Neida Martinez**  
**CEA - Family and Community Health**  
**Starr County**



# Save the Dates ...



## Leadership Opportunities in TEAFCS

Interested in taking a leadership role in TEAFCS? This summer the officer positions of President- Elect, Second Vice President, First Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Texas Extra Editor, and 4-H Foundation Delegate will be up for election. Please see the by-laws for the qualification requirements for each position.

<https://teafcs.tamu.edu/files/2023/08/TEAFCS-Bylaws-updated-07.26.23-posted-8.30.23.pdf>

Be on the look out for the officer application on the website.

# Dates to Remember...

*Thank  
You*

The Contributing Editors:

Felice Acker                      Milissa Wright  
Jennifer Trufan                  Emily Fisher  
Bethany Arie                     Amanda Krippel  
Cathy Pearson                  Elyse Hernandez  
Haley Cowley                  Meagen Dennison  
Cynthia Covarrubias

---

## 2024 State AgriLife Extension Conference

Tuesday, July 30 - Thursday, August 1, 2024

College Station, TX  
on the Texas A&M University Campus

Professional Development | Required Subject Matter Trainings  
Breakout Sessions | Keynote Speakers | Networking

---

## TEAFCS and NEAFCS Award Deadlines

Please note the following deadlines for both NEAFCS and TEAFCS Award  
Applications:

NEAFCS Awards (TEXAS SUBMISSION DEADLINE): February 14, 2024

TEAFCS State Awards Only Deadline: April 5, 2024

TEAFCS Scholarship Deadline: April 5, 2024



---

## Texas Extra Dates

Submission Due Date

March 15, 2024 ..... April 2024  
June 15, 2024 ..... July 2024  
September 15, 2024 ..... October 2024  
December 15, 2024 ..... January 2025

Edition Release Date

