



E-Newsletter

SUMMER 2023

VOL. 3



SUMMER, SUMMER, SUMMER TIME!

**By Caroline Cruz, Montgomery County Extension Agent -
Family & Community Health**

Summer is here! Are you ready? We hope you get a chance to spend some time doing things you love, whether taking a vacation, going somewhere fun, or hanging around home. Our home state of Texas has so many neat places!

Your summer plans may include backyard BBQ's, family get-togethers, or maybe a picnic or camping trip. Food is an important part of these events. Food safety is something that should always be a top priority, in order to prevent foodborne illness. Check out our **Cooking Outdoors Safely** tip sheet later in this newsletter. We also now offer **Food Handlers Courses!**

Our county-wide **Walk Across Texas!** Challenge officially ended on May 28th. Learn some of the results in this newsletter. You can participate, for free, any time of year! Learn more at: <https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu/>

We are hiring! The role of Extension Program Assistant - Family & Community Health is open! This is a full-time county position with benefits! We are looking for an engaging educator to join our Texas A&M Agrilife Extension team here in Montgomery County. Do you love making a positive difference in the lives of others? In this role, you will assist with and conduct educational programs including health, wellness, family education, nutrition, youth, and other topics. Extension also provides professional development opportunities so our employees can gain knowledge and skills related to Extension programs. Please share this with your networks. Check out the posting and application instructions on the Montgomery County HR website: https://www.mctx.org/departments/departments_g_-_j/human_resources/job_opportunities.php

Please make plans to join us for our Family & Community Health Program Area Committee Summer Shindig! We will discuss our education programs and share successes, as well as get your input on our future plans! We'd love to see you, and join us for summer refreshments! June 27th, Tuesday at 3:45 pm. RSVP to 936-539-7825 or email alicia.martinez@ag.tamu.edu. Have a safe, happy, and healthy summer!

In This Edition

- Spring Program Results
- Job Posting
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We Watermelon!

- Watermelons are Texas' largest annual horticultural crop.
- Texas ranks 3rd in U.S. production of this crop.
- Over 42,000 acres are grown in over 100 Texas counties.
- Watermelon is 92% water.
- Excellent levels of vitamins A, B6, and C.
- Look for a symmetrical melon with no cuts or dents.
- Melon should be heavy for its size.
- Underside should be a yellow cream color from where it sat on the ground.

Source: Aggie Horticulture and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

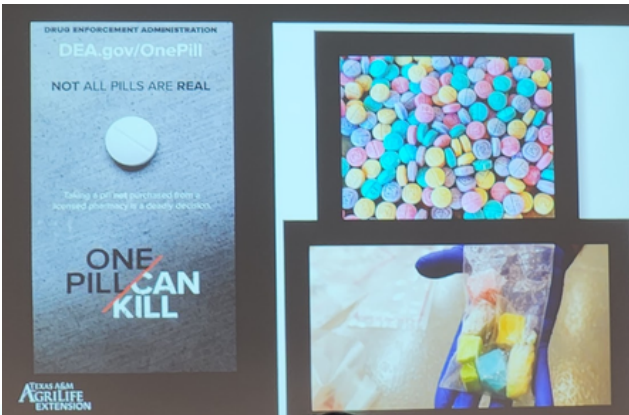


Check It Out!



"Drug Trends in Youth" Education Program

On May 24th, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Watch UR BAC Program in cooperation with TxDOT offered an interactive program using visual aids and education on the recent dangerous youth trends in alcohol and drugs including illicit drugs and over-the-counter medications. This program, taught by AgriLife Extension Program Specialist Ben Smith, was for parents, adult family members, school nurses, school resource officers, school administrators, law enforcement, or anyone working with youth. We learned about items sold at smoke shops and convenience stores, clothing that might have drug references and stash containers, and learned more about vaping and e-cigarettes. A huge thank you to Texas Extension Education Association in Montgomery County for organizing this event. To learn more visit: <https://watchurbac.tamu.edu/>



We Are Hiring!

Join the
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Team in Montgomery County!

Position:
Extension Program Assistant - Family & Community Health

- Make a positive impact in our county.
- Assist with and conduct educational programs including health, wellness, family, and community-based topics.
- Full-time position with benefits!

See the full job posting on the Human Resources Department Tab at <https://www.mctx.org/> or scan QR

Hello Summer

Family & Community Health Program Area Committee Summer Shindig!

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**We need your input to help create future programs!**

**Date:** June 27th, Tuesday  
**Time:** 3:45 PM

**Location:** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe, 77303

**R.S.V.P.** 936-539-7825 or email: [alicia.martinez@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:alicia.martinez@ag.tamu.edu)

Summer refreshments served!



# Spring Things!



## **Child Passenger Safety Seat Inspection**

was held on March 29th. Did you know nearly 2 out of 3 car seats are used incorrectly? Safety Seat Technicians performed approximately 30 safety inspections of car seats (if they had one) in family vehicles, for free. Replacement car seats were given when needed. First Presbyterian Church of Conroe volunteered its parking lot for the event.

## **Montgomery County Fair Kids Days**

were a blast! 1,200 school students, teachers, and parents attended two days of "Kids Days" at the Montgomery County Fair. We taught students about Texas agricultural commodities using the *Walk Across Texas! Ag Commodities Map* and real food products for them to identify the product and learn where the crops or animals are grown or raised in Texas.



## **Early Childhood Educator Training - "Tremendous Teachers"**

On April 15th, 23 educators were trained in Project Learning Tree's *Trees & Me* curriculum for ages 1-6. Grant funds through Texas Project Learning Tree covered the cost of the teacher guides for each participant. Teachers learned about environmental education with age-appropriate activities for children ages 1-6 in their care. This training was held at Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center, collaborating with Harris County AgriLife Extension and Jesse Jones Staff. This training was so much fun!





# WALK ACROSS TEXAS!

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION



The 2023 Montgomery County *Walk Across Texas!* (WAT) County-wide Challenge began on April 3rd and ended on May 28th. WAT! encourages physical activity for adults forming teams of 8 people. New this year, we introduced the County Spirit Stick, which traveled to county departments that log the most WAT! miles during the 8-week challenge for some fun, friendly competition!

**While the final data is still being logged by participants, preliminary data shows that a total of 41,785.05 miles were accrued by challenge participants! We had a total of 35 teams with 244 participants! We'll include final results in a future e-newsletter.**



Presentation of the inaugural County Employee Team Spirit Stick at Commissioner's Court.



Team "Wild and Wacky Walkers" gave us a lot of inspiration! Look at them go!



County Employee Team "Scramblin' Varmints" from Precinct 3 Spring Creek Nature Center earned the Spirit Stick several times! They had some fun, can you tell?



County Employee Team "Red Hot Chili Steppers" from the County Library battled hard for the Spirit Stick!

# What's Going On?



# SUMMER



| DATE                    | EVENT                                                                                                                                                                                                           | INFO                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 4-8                | Texas 4-H Roundup, College Station.<br>4-H members, parents, and Extension Staff conduct 4-H contests, workshops, and more.                                                                                     | <a href="https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/">https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/</a>                                                                                                                                                   |
| June 14,<br>Wednesday   | Food Handlers Certification Class held at the Extension Office. The Texas Food Handlers Certification Course is required for any food service employee within 60 days of employment. Time: 1:45 pm - 4 pm.      | Register online:<br><a href="https://forms.microsoft.com/r/QTn6qqKBtc">https://forms.microsoft.com/r/QTn6qqKBtc</a><br>or call the office at 936-539-7825. The course is \$20 and your card lasts 2 years.            |
| June 19,<br>Monday      | The Extension Office will be closed in observance of Juneteenth.                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| June 27,<br>Tuesday     | Family & Community Health Program Area Committee Summer Shindig! - Learn about our FCH Programs and give input into our plan of work for the future! 3:45 pm.                                                   | RSVP by calling 936-539-7825 or emailing <a href="mailto:alicia.martinez@ag.tamu.edu">alicia.martinez@ag.tamu.edu</a><br>Refreshments will be served!                                                                 |
| July 4,<br>Tuesday      | The Extension Office will be closed in observance of Independence Day.                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| July 15,<br>Saturday    | Nurturing Kids in Nature Childcare Conference. 6 CEU's for early childhood educators and childcare providers. Discover education programs designed to create learning environments that connect kids to nature. | Galveston County Extension Office.<br>Registration is online at:<br><a href="https://galveston.agrilife.org/fch/">https://galveston.agrilife.org/fch/</a>                                                             |
| July 18, 20,<br>21      | 4-H Crochet Classes for Beginners. This is for enrolled 4-H members. Class will be taught by TEEA Members.                                                                                                      | To learn more about the 4-H Youth Development Program, visit:<br><a href="https://agrilife.org/montgomery4h/">https://agrilife.org/montgomery4h/</a>                                                                  |
| August 16,<br>Wednesday | Food Handlers Certification Class held at the Extension Office. The Texas Food Handlers Certification Course is required for any food service employee within 60 days of employment. Time: 1:45 pm - 4 pm.      | Register online:<br><a href="https://forms.microsoft.com/r/QTn6qqKBtc">https://forms.microsoft.com/r/QTn6qqKBtc</a><br>or call the office at 936-539-7825. The course is \$20 per person and your card lasts 2 years. |
| August 26,<br>Saturday  | Trees & Me Early Childhood Educator Workshop. Become trained in Project Learning Tree's 1-6 year old curriculum, in a fun, hands-on workshop!                                                                   | Contact us at 936-539-7825 or email <a href="mailto:caroline.cruz@ag.tamu.edu">caroline.cruz@ag.tamu.edu</a> for information!<br>This workshop will be held in Brazoria County.                                       |



# Cooking Outdoors Safely



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

**Thaw safely.** The best way to thaw is by placing the frozen meat, fish, poultry, or seafood in the refrigerator.

**Marinate carefully.** Use marinade to add flavor, not germs. Marinate only in the refrigerator — never on the counter top.

## TRANSPORT WITH CARE

**Transport safely.** Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood cold (40°F degrees or less) with ice/ice packs. Place foods in the cooler right before leaving and take only what you plan to cook and eat that day.

### Other tips:

Keep raw meat, poultry, or seafood stored in a sealed bag or container. Do not keep other foods or beverages in the same cooler as raw meat, poultry or seafood.

Keep coolers out of direct sunlight to keep the temperature at 40°F degrees or colder. Only open coolers when necessary to keep the cold air inside.

## KEEP FOOD HOT

Keep cooked meat, poultry, fish, and seafood at 140°F degrees or warmer until served. Keep cooked meats warm by moving them to the side of the grill, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, place them in an oven set at 200°F degrees or in a slow cooker.

Created by Hannah Czajkowski and Rebecca Dittmar, April 2020  
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## KEEP IT CLEAN!

Wash your hands before and after touching raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

Wash work surfaces and cutting boards with hot, soapy water and sanitize before and after grilling.

Try to use one cutting board for fresh produce and another one for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood.

After you have placed raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood on the grill wash utensils and platters with hot soapy water before using them to serve the cooked food.

## COOKING

Cook foods to a safe internal temperature. The chart below shows the minimum internal temperature, measured with a food thermometer, that a food needs to reach in order to be consumed safely. Once beef, veal, lamb, pork, steaks, roasts and chops have been removed from their heat source, allow for a three minute rest period before consumption. Fish, poultry, and ground beef to not require a rest period before consumption.

|                                                  |               |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Beef, pork, veal, lamb, steaks, chops and roasts | 145°F degrees |
| Fish                                             | 145°F degrees |
| Ground Beef                                      | 160°F degrees |
| Poultry                                          | 165°F degrees |

## REFRIGERATE COOKED FOOD

Cooked foods like meat, poultry, fish or seafood should be eaten or refrigerated right away. Foods left out for more than two hours should be thrown away. When the weather is warm (90°F degrees or above), cooked foods should be eaten or stored within one hour.

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

**Stay hydrated! Water and non-sugary drinks are best to keep you healthy and hydrated. Avoid heat stress, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Learn more here:**  
<https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2022/05/20/beating-the-summer-heat/>

**Looking for more food safety info? Visit:** <https://foodsafety.tamu.edu/>

# Recipe Round-Up

## Summer Salad

### Ingredients:

#### **Dressing**

- 1 avocado sliced
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons chipotle in adobo sauce minced
- 1 garlic clove minced

#### **Salad**

- 2 cup frozen corn kernels thawed and drained
- 4 medium roma tomatoes seeded and diced
- 1 cup jicama diced
- 4 medium tomatillos diced
- 2 medium jalapeños seeded and diced
- 1/4 cup green onion sliced
- 1/2 cup cilantro chopped

### Directions:

#### **General**

1. Clean your preparation area and wash your hands. Wash your vegetables (tomatoes, jicama, tomatillos, jalapeños, green onion, and cilantro).

#### **Dressing**

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.
2. Set aside while prepping salad or refrigerate until ready to serve.

#### **Salad**

1. Combine all ingredients and gently toss.
2. Drizzle with dressing and toss until evenly coated.



### Nutrition Facts:

6 servings per container  
Serving size (245g)

Calories: 150  
Total fat: 9g  
Saturated fat: 1g  
Sodium: 20mg  
Total Carbohydrate: 19g  
Dietary Fiber: 5g  
Total Sugars: 5g  
Protein: 3g

Calcium: 25mg  
Iron: 1mg  
Potassium: 567mg

**Serves: 6**



Looking for new recipes? Visit <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>



FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

# Stay Connected

There are many ways you can reach us. Call us at the number below, follow us on social media, visit our website. Are you a community organization, non-profit, or agency that aligns with the mission and values of AgriLife Extension? If so, let us know if we could consider partnering with you on news, events, or classes!

*Extension - the "best kept secret" in Montgomery County! Tell your friends!*



*Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Family & Community Health  
4-H & Youth Development  
Horticulture  
Better Living for Texans*

LOCATED ACROSS FROM THE LONE STAR CONVENTION CENTER



936.539.7825



@TexasA&MAgriLife  
ExtensionMontgomeryCounty



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Conroe, TX 77303



<https://montgomery.agrilife.org>



@MontCoFCH



<https://fch.tamu.edu/>

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Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in this event are encouraged to contact the Extension Office for assistance at 936-539-7822.