

**Education of Best Management Practices in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed
FY 05 CWA 319(h)**

Quarter no. 1 From 10/01/05 Through 12/31/05

I. Abstract

After much anticipation, the project was finally kicked-off this quarter and hit the ground running. On October 5, 2005, a project coordination meeting and Arroyo Agricultural Issues Work Group Meeting were held to discuss the project and the agricultural component of the watershed protection plan. Four major educational meetings were also conducted this quarter providing crop production, nutrient management, and conservation program information to 245 agricultural producers from Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. A Soil Testing Campaign was conducted throughout the reporting period as well. Both TWRI and TCE participated in the *Meeting of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Steering Committee and Partnership*. Finally, plans were made for three more educational meetings in the Valley.

II. Overall Progress and Results by Task

TASK 1: Project Coordination

Subtask 1.1: Conduct quarterly meetings as appropriate with project participants (TWRI, TCE, TSSWCB, SWCDs, NRCS, Arroyo-Colorado Watershed Coordinator, TAMU Kingsville, etc.) to discuss project schedule, completion of deliverables, outreach and participation strategies, communication needs and other requirements.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. TWRI and TCE met in Weslaco on October 5, 2005 to discuss project tasks, reporting requirements, eligible uses of funding, and match.

10% Complete

Subtask 1.2: TWRI will submit project strategies / programs and project status as necessary to the Ag Issues Workgroup via TSSWCB for inclusion in the Watershed Protection Plan.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. A discussion of the project strategies / programs, as well as a copy of the project workplan, has been included in the Watershed Protection Plan.
- b. TCE provided a discussion of the project status to the Ag Issues Workgroup on October 5, 2005.

20% Complete

Subtask 1.3: TWRI will prepare electronic quarterly reports and submit to TSSWCB

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Submitted Year 1, Quarter 1 Progress Report to TSSWCB on January 13, 2006

10% Complete

Subtask 1.4: TWRI and TCE will develop a final project report and submit to TSSWCB.

0% Complete

TASK 2: Conducting Local Educational Meetings

Subtask 2.1: Meetings will serve to educate individuals on specific crop production techniques. Each of the following meetings will be held on an annual basis.

- 2 cotton production meetings in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties
- 1 sorghum production meeting in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties
- 1 sugar cane production meeting in Hidalgo County
- 1 citrus production meeting in Hidalgo County
- 1 vegetable production meeting in Hidalgo County
- County / multi-county Pesticide Applicator Safety Training and Continuing Education

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. On November 9, 2005, a Pesticide Safety Training was held to train people in the safe use of crop protection chemicals. Topics included: the principles of integrated pest management, non-chemical alternatives, pest features, ground and surface water protection, laws and regulations, pesticide labels, endangered species protection, Worker Protection Standards, record keeping, personal protection, application equipment, calibration and continuing education units. This training is held quarterly and has been scheduled for February, May, August, and November 2006.
- b. A Sugar Growers Meeting, held on November 21, 2005, provided crop production and nutrient management information, as well as promoted participation in the soil testing campaign, to 70 sugar growers from Cameron and Hidalgo County.
- c. The Rio Farms Crops Meeting, held on December 8, 2005, provided crop production and nutrient management information, as well as promoted participation in the soil testing campaign, to 80 producers from Cameron and Hidalgo County.
- d. The Southwest Grain Meeting, held on December 13, 2005, provided crop production and nutrient management information, as well as promoted participation in the soil testing campaign, to 20 producers from Hidalgo County.

10% Complete

Subtask 2.2: Meetings, demonstrations and other educational activities will serve to educate individuals on nutrient management techniques. Specifically:

- A soil testing campaign will be conducted within the 3 counties to promote proper use of fertilizers.
- When available, summarized data will be collected from TAMU-Kingsville and compiled into educational fact sheets or presented.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. A Nutrient Management Workshop held on October 11, 2005 provided nutrient management education to 75 producers from Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties. See attached agenda for more details
- b. A Soil Testing Campaign was conducted throughout the quarter in Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties to promote proper use of fertilizers.

10% Complete

Subtask 2.3: Meetings and promotional events will serve to advertise and educate individuals on related programs addressing water quality. For example, Texas Cooperative Extension will:

- *Promote cost-share programs (319(h), EQIP, etc.)*
- *Educate producers or assist SWCDs in development of water quality management plans*
- *Educate producers on involvement and development of the Watershed Protection Plan and the potential effects of its implementation.*

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. The EQIP Program and WQMP Program were both discussed at the Nutrient Management Workshop held on October 11, 2005 (see attached agenda).
- b. The EQIP Program will also be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Cotton Pre-Plant Seminar, planned for January 19, 2006.
- c. TCE and TWRI participated in the *Meeting of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Steering Committee and Partnership* held on November 10, 2005 in Weslaco. TWRI provided an overview of the Agricultural Component of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Plan and discussed the activities of the Agricultural Work Group.

10% Complete

III. Related Issues/Current Problems and Favorable or Unusual Developments

- None

IV. Projected Work for Next Quarter

- January 19, 2006 – A Cotton Pre-Plant Seminar will be held at the Best Western Palm Aire in Weslaco (see attached agenda for more details).
- January 25, 2006 – A CEU Workshop will be held at the A&M Research & Extension Center in Weslaco to provide 5 hours of continuing education for all private, commercial and non-commercial TDA license holders.
- February 22, 2006 – A CEU Workshop will be held at the A&M Research & Extension Center in Weslaco to provide 5 hours of continuing education for all private, commercial and non-commercial TDA license holders.

Crop Nutrient Management Workshop

Topics sure to save you money, grow a quality crop and be environmentally friendly

Tuesday, October 11, 2005

9:00 a.m.

A&M Research & Extension Center- Weslaco

Lunch provided

3 hours of TDA and CCA CEU's to be offered

Putting it All Together to Maximize Yield: Fertility, Irrigation, and Crop Management

Charles Stichler, Extension Agronomist, Uvalde

Results of Last Year's Soil Testing Campaign and the Value of Soil Testing

Dr. Mark McFarland, Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, College Station

Concurrent Sessions

Citrus	Dr. Julian Sauls, Extension Horticulturist, Weslaco
Vegetables	Dr. Larry Stein, Extension Horticulturist, Uvalde
Sugarcane	Dr. Robert Wiedenfeld, Professor, TAES, Weslaco
Cotton	Charles Stichler, Extension Agronomist, Uvalde
Corn/Sorghum	Dr. Mark McFarland, Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, College Station

EQIP Program: Eligible Practices, Cost Share Rates, Application Deadlines

Arturo Ybarra, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Edinburg

Ag Issues on the Arroyo Colorado

Andy Garza, Regional Manager, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board
Harlingen

Kickoff of Soil Testing Campaign for the Valley

County Extension Agents- Dr. Enrique Perez, Omar Montemayor, Omar Cavazos, Brad Cowan

Door Prizes- over 100 door prizes valued at \$50 to be given away!

Persons with special needs are requested to call 800-638-8239 in advance so these may be addressed
Agriculture and Natural Resources " Family and Consumer Sciences " 4-H and Youth Development " Community Development
Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating
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COTTON PRE-PLANT SEMINAR

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Annual Membership Meeting of the Cotton and Grain Producers of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Thursday, January 19, 2006

Best Western Palm Aire, Expressway 83 and FM 1015, Weslaco

8:00 - 8:30 Registration (free of charge) Door Prizes

Program begins at 8:30 a.m., concludes around 3:30 p.m.

4 hours of TDA CEU's and CCA CEU's being applied for

Program Topics

- **Cotton Physiology: Irrigation and Fertility to Maximize Production**
Charles Stichler, Extension Agronomist, Uvalde
- **Economics of Cotton Variety Selection**
Dr. Luis Ribera, Extension Economist, Weslaco
- **Cotton IPM Program for 2006**
Manda Cattaneo, Extension Cotton IPM Entomologist, Weslaco
- **Cotton Varieties: Big Changes This Coming Season**
Charles Stichler, Extension Agronomist, Uvalde

Lunch Sponsored by our Allied Industry Partners

Luncheon: Annual Membership Meeting of the
Cotton and Grain Producers of the Lower Rio Grande Valley
Glenn Wilde, President
Dr. Webb Wallace, Executive Director

- **Cotton Market Situation and Outlook**
Dr. John Robinson, Extension Economist, College Station
- **EQIP Program Reminders**
Arturo Ybarra, NRCS District Conservationist, Edinburg
- **Boll Weevil Eradication Program in the RGV: The First Full Season**
Charles Allen, Program Director, Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Abilene
Lindy Patton, Executive Director, Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Abilene
- **New Developments from Industry**
Industry Representatives

For more information contact: Brad Cowan, County Extension Agent-Ag, Hidalgo Co., 383-1026; Dr. Enrique Perez, County Extension Agent-Ag, Cameron Co., 361-8236; Omar Cavazos, County Extension Agent-Ag, Willacy Co., 689-2412.

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