

**Texas A&M AgriLife
Texas Water Resources Institute**

**Education of Best Management Practices in the Arroyo Colorado Watershed
FY 05 CWA 319(h)
TSSWCB Agreement No. 05-10**

Quarter no. 12 From 7/1/08 Through 9/30/08

I. Abstract

This quarter, 244 residents from Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties were educated on specific crop production techniques and pesticide applicator safety as it pertains to protection of water quality in the Arroyo Colorado. An additional 35 residents benefited from programs specifically addressing nutrient management education in the watershed. Total number of attendees who have benefited from the Arroyo Colorado Education Program is now 5,303. Finally, in a related effort, a total number of 159 residents (mostly homeowners) attended Master Gardener programs this quarter that taught similar principles of environmentally sound production practices as the agricultural education program.

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. Project personnel met in August prior to the Ag Issues Workgroup Meeting to discuss project status and activities.
- b. A final project meeting will be held during the next quarter to finalize the project and begin development of the final report.

92% 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. AgriLife Extension personnel provided an ag education program update to the Ag Issues Workgroup Meeting on August 20, 2008.
- b. TWRI requested a 6 month no-cost extension and it was approved. The new project end date is February 28, 2009.

92% 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 3, Quarter 4 Progress Report to TSSWCB on October 15, 2008.

92% 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:

Date	Event	County	Description	Attendance
7/29/08	Corn, Soybean, Cotton Field Day	C,H,W	Soybean varieties, soybean insects, soybean diseases, soybean production systems, corn update, cotton update, FSA update	78
8/13/08	Pesticide Safety Training	CH	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.	9

8/26/08	Vector Control Training	CHW	general pesticide safety, biology & ecology of mosquitoes, diseases vectored by mosquitoes, surveillance and sampling, demonstration of traps, principals of mosquito control	40
9/12/08	Sugarcane Board	CHW	Waste Pesticide Collection Day	20
9/25/08	Sugarcane Field Day	CHW	Sugarcane varieties, development of sugarcane GMO's, crop rotation, Co-Op update, pesticide laws and regulations, Waste Pesticide Collection Day, Nutrient Management Field Day and soil testing campaign	82
9/26/08	Cotton & Grain Producers Association Meeting	CHW	Waste Pesticide Collection Day, Nutrient Management Field Day and soil testing campaign	15

92% 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:

Date	Event	County	Description	Attendance
9/16/08	Texas Ag Industries	CHW	Nutrient loading	20
9/26/08	Cotton & Grain Producers Association Meeting	CHW	Waste Pesticide Collection Day, Nutrient Management Field Day and soil testing campaign	15

92% Complete

Subtask 2.3: Meetings and promotional events will serve to advertise and educate individuals on related programs addressing water quality. For example, TCE 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. None to report at this time.

92% Complete

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

- Important education efforts for Master Gardener groups also occurred during this quarter. While these are not directly related to agricultural production, many of them teach the same principles of nutrient management, environmentally sound practices and water quality aspects that help protect the Arroyo Colorado. The following Master Gardener programs took place.

Date	Event	County	Description	Attendance
7/1/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Develop plans for Arboretum	6
7/8/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Develop plans for Composting Class	8
7/16/08	Master Gardener Class	C	Butterfly Gardening and Herb Gardening	28
7/22/08	Master Gardeners Leadership Team	C	Composting Demonstration Class	6
8/6/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Composting Demonstration Class	7
8/20/08	Master Gardener Class	C	Irrigation and Fertilization-Home Fruit and Citrus	27
8/26/08	Master Gardener Program	C	Earthwise Gardening-Environmental Stewardship	13
9/4/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Tour arboretum, ID native plants-Drainage Evaluation	8

9/10/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Composting Class	14
9/17/08	Master Gardener Class	C	Turf Irrigation and Fertilization	27
9/25/08	Master Gardener Leadership Team	C	Native Landscape Activity-Arboretum	14

IV. Projected Work for Next Quarter

- A final project meeting will be held during the next quarter to finalize the project and begin development of the final report.
- TWRI will request a budget amendment to cover the cost of the annual soil testing campaign during the next quarter.
- Education efforts will continue.
- Submit Year 4, Quarter 1 Report.
- Work will begin on the final report.