

Protecting and Conserving Texas' Vital Water Resources

Making a Difference

Water Quality and Quantity Concerns

- ◆ Population growth, increasing water demands, contamination issues and drought have placed the state's water supply under tremendous stress.
- ◆ Water demand in Texas is projected to increase by 22 percent between 2010 and 2060.
- ◆ As a result, protecting water resources and utilizing water-conservation practices will be essential to sustain the state's water supply-and-demand balance.

Extension's Response

- ◆ The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service delivers a wide range of programs focusing on water quality, including areas such as watershed protection, onsite wastewater treatment systems, private water well screening, and soil nutrient management.
- ◆ Water conservation programs of AgriLife Extension focus on household water-conservation principles and improved irrigation efficiencies in lawns, landscapes and agricultural production systems.
- ◆ These programs teach participants about water conservation, efficient use, sustainable practices, watershed management and environmental stewardship.
- ◆ Through 660 educational events, planning meetings and workshops in 2011, AgriLife Extension reached more than 106,000 educational contacts (producers, residents and landowners) to increase public awareness and participation vital to improving and sustaining the state's water supply-and-demand balance.

Economic and Environmental Impacts

- ◆ The economic benefits of AgriLife Extension's water-resource programs can be measured in terms of water

cost savings, number of jobs and annual wages for participants trained in the landscape-irrigation profession, and externally funded grant dollars received and spent locally to implement watershed-protection and educational programs.

- ◆ AgriLife Extension programs targeting landscape-irrigation certification directly support 487 jobs with \$11.4 million in annual wages.
- ◆ Water quality has been restored in the Buck Creek Watershed, and the Plum Creek Watershed has been removed from the EPA's list of impaired water bodies.
- ◆ Water-conservation programs have resulted in a potential savings of 611 million gallons annually, valued at \$2.5 million (based on average municipal water rates).
- ◆ Efficient use of nutrients has reduced potential fertilizer application by over 9.2 million pounds, increasing net returns to producers by \$6.4 million.
- ◆ Externally funded grants totaling \$10.6 million that support 37 jobs have been obtained to implement critical water-quality protection activities.
- ◆ In addition, the ultimate societal benefit to Texas is protection and more efficient use of scarce water resources.

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