Overweight + Inactivity = Increased Risk of Chronic Disease

- Excessive weight and inactivity are consistently linked with increased incidence of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer.
- Twenty-nine percent of American adults are not physically active at all, and 50 percent are not active enough to achieve health benefits.
- Only 27 percent of students in grades nine through 12 engage in recommended amounts of moderate-intensity physical activity.

Extension’s Response

- Extension developed Walk Across Texas! – a fun and fitness program created to help participants adopt the habit of regular, moderate-intensity exercise.
- Teams of eight family members, friends, co-workers or neighbors walk together or individually for eight weeks. Some also attend Extension classes and receive information on nutrition, exercise, weight loss and other health topics.
- Teams compete to see who can walk the 800 miles “across Texas” first, and all participants are recognized for their achievements.
- Since 1996, more than 100,000 Texans have participated to significantly increase their physical activity level.

Economic Benefit

- Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can permanently or temporarily delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in 58 percent of people.
- Over the lifetime of the 18,590 participants in the 2011 program, an estimated 3,991 could prevent the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity.
- Average annual health care cost (age adjusted) for people without diabetes is $5,095 and $11,744 for people with diabetes.
- The estimated potential lifetime health care cost savings are $63,210 for females and $57,230 for males. When avoidance of lost wages is included, the potential lifetime economic benefit for 2011 participants is $265 million.
- Participants should also experience reduced incidence, severity and health care costs of other chronic diseases linked to excessive weight and inactivity.