

Supporting Crop Production THROUGH EDUCATION



Challenges

- > Rising input costs and various production-related challenges, including droughts, disease, invasive species and other pests have placed serious stress on farmers across the state.
- > Changing global markets and managing agricultural production and price risk have farmers seeking ways to maximize production efficiency to maintain competitiveness.
- > Issues regarding the balance between Texas' water supply and demand have brought about the need for more efficient use of this vital resource.

AgriLife Extension Response

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service delivers wide-ranging educational programs focused on research-based crop production and management practices, evaluation of technologies, improved decision-making, water-use efficiency and job training.

- > Programs for crop producers cover variety testing, soil nutrient management, irrigation efficiency, disease and pest identification and control, commodity marketing, financial risk management and farm bill education.
- > AgriLife Extension is at the forefront in responding to emerging issues such as drought, floods, wildfires and insect and disease outbreaks.
- > Through 5,900 educational events, planning meetings, and workshops in 2019, AgriLife Extension reached more than 760,000 educational and other contacts.
- > AgriLife Extension often collaborates with industry groups and other government entities to deliver educational programs.

Economic Impacts

Selected programs are highlighted below, where impacts were measured by the increase in net returns associated with adopting certain management practices taught in 2019.

- > The economic benefit resulting from the increase in net returns for boll weevil eradication was estimated at **\$312 million**, with cumulative benefits surpassing **\$4.7 billion** (since 1996).
- > Outreach related to crops, floriculture, nursery production and marketing led to an estimated increase in annual net returns of **\$56.5 million**, and assisted cotton growers with variety selection valued at **\$27.8 million**.
- > Programs focusing on managing crop and livestock financial risk resulted in estimated gains of **\$31.4 million**.
- > The impacts above support an additional **4,746 jobs** in agribusiness and retail-related sectors.
- > **17,305 Texas farm units** were analyzed using the web-based 2018 Farm Bill Decision Aid, developed by the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC). The estimated impact of improved decision-making was **\$216 million** over the two-year horizon (2019-2020).
- > Through continuing education related to pesticide safety and cotton ginning, job training supports 64,041 Texas jobs, with an annual wage base of **\$982 million**.

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