

Path to the Plate - Lubbock County 2019

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Relevance

In Texas, there are 242,000 farm operations utilizing over 130 million acres. Myths and misinformation about food production and the effect that has on our health is emerging ever-quickly through social media and other sources. This misinformation leads to a misunderstanding of our agricultural systems as well as the positive connection they have to our health. The goal of the Path to the Plate program is for all Texans to learn to make informed decisions related to the food they eat based on truthful, relevant and accurate information.



Response

Lubbock County AgriLife Extension conducts several Agricultural literacy programs for youth; however, there are no programs for teachers. With that in mind my Path to the Plate task force wanted to offer an Ag literacy program for teachers. The main objective is to educate the teachers about agriculture and health, so informed decisions could be made regarding the food they eat. Another objective is to give them research-based information to dispel myths and promote trusts, as well as educate the uninformed consumer regarding agriculture and health.

In 2018 I began by developing a Facebook page entitled “Lubbock County Path to the Plate”. To date the page has 125 members. The page has had sixty-six posts on educational information as well as fifteen videos. Posts have been shared 208 times. Information continues to be posted to this page on a regular basis for the public’s use. I also developed an email list of area school teachers in order to send factsheets and agricultural information. The Facebook page was promoted through social media, as well as email blasts, Region 17, mass media and the Lubbock County AgriLife Extension website.



Pictured above: Teachers learning about dairies.

An Ag tour was scheduled for July 23rd. Nine teachers signed up for the tour. The tour consisted of the following: Bayer Cotton Seed Manufacturing, Blue Sky Dairy and the District 2 vineyard. After the tour, we moved to the classroom at the Texas Tech Animal and Food Science Building where participants learned about GMO’s, Beef Industry, Food Labeling, organics vs nonorganic, egg production and toured the meats lab.



Pictured above: Teachers learning about vineyards.

Results

Teachers were given an evaluation to complete as well as participating in a group discussion after the program.

Teachers left with a better understanding:

- of the connection between agriculture and health
- the path food production takes to get to our plate
- of the importance and nutritional value of various foods
- of the way farmers and ranchers produce the food
- of the value of agriculture and how it is important in daily life



Pictured above: Teachers learning about meat.

Teachers were asked.

What has been the most important thing you have learned at the Path to the Plate Workshop?

- a. Better understanding of GMO's
- b. Better understanding the meat industry and the process of how things work
- c. Variety of exposure to different types of agriculture
- d. Leaned there are misconceptions about agriculture and its products
- e. Learned how to help kids understand agriculture and how it affects them
- f. Become aware of the agriculture in our local area; agriculture plays an important roll in our lives; it is important to all of us; there is a lot of misinformation about agriculture
- g. Organics versus Chemicals
- h. Gardening discussion very informative & applicable to life; can have classroom tie in
- i. Learning more about fertilizers and pesticides
- j. Learning about all the different steps taken for each situation, such as plants & animals

Do you plan on using today's information in your classroom?

Nine out of nine teachers or 100% indicated they plan on implementing what they learned in their classroom.

Future Programming

Plans for the next Path to the Plate teachers' program are in the process. The date for the 2020 program has been set for June 24th and will offer eight Professional development hours for the training. The program will continue to focus on Agriculture products grown on the South Plains.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the following presenters and volunteers for their time and expertise: Blue Sky Dairy, Manager- David Christofer, Idalou Egg Ranch, Bayer Cotton Seed Manufacturing, Pierre Helwi Extension Horticulturist, Dr. Jordan Bell Extension Agronomist, Tate Corliss Red Raider Meats and Christina Reid Lubbock Horticulturist.

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