

# Tools For Exceptional Support Staff Conference

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Williamson County*

**Crops & Weather Report**  
**July 17—August 6**

Data From Georgetown II Weather Station  
YTD= from January 1, 2014

Temps.		Precipitation	
High	96°F	Week	0.00 inches
Ave	90°F	21 Day	2.65 inches
Low	66°F	YTD	12.23 inches
Ave	72°F		

**For this past week:**

Sunday—only reports east of Hwy 35 from trace to 5" north of Taylor  
Monday—no rain reported  
Tuesday—no rain report  
Wednesday—no rain report  
Thursday—no rain report  
Friday Only traces across SW county line.

**Evapotranspiration**

Week	1.63 inches
21 Day	5.01 inches
YTD	42.71 inches

**Relative Humidity**

Week-	21 Day-High	70%
High	Low	31%
Low	Ave	43%
Ave	YTD- Ave	41%

**Heat Units**

21 Day-	50	657
	55°	512
	60°	477
YTD-	50°	3933
	55°	3101
	60°	2324

**Chilling Units**

Oct	10
Nov	247
Dec	417
Jan	404
Feb	300
Season	1378

**Crops Report:**

The grain sorghum harvest wrapped up, with average yields reported. Some corn was harvested. Hay fields are no longer growing. Haygrazer fields that had been cut once will need another rain to make a second cutting. Sugarcane aphids continued to damage grain sorghum and were moving into haygrazer fields.

## Support Staff Conference A Success

The Tools for an Exceptional Support Staff Conference was held on Friday, August 8 at the Williamson County Extension office campus in Georgetown. There were 19 participants representing city, county and Extension offices.

The purpose of the program originated with the large turn-over in the Williamson County Extension office and the need to build a team that fully understands the mission of Extension, superior customer service and is proficient with the tools that are needed to the job. Tools include Excel software, social media, business communication and website technologies.

Experts in each of those topics were recruited from Extension, other agencies and industry to assure the best and most current information and strategies was presented to

the attendees.

Williamson County Judge Dan Gattis welcomed the coterie and set the stage for the day with his opening remarks.

John Males started the day with a discussion of the generations both as customers and co-workers in the office place. Males is the founder and owner of Fanthom Corporate Training. He is a graduate of Baylor University's top ranking entrepreneurship and international business programs with more than 20 years of experience in corporate turnaround environments. He spent 11 years on the management team of Continental Airlines, taking part in what is recognized as one of the largest and most significant corporate turnarounds in American business history.

He was followed by Ingeborg (Inky) Chandler-Mertz. She has been involved in computer software training for over 20 years spanning several continents. Currently she is the technical trainer for Williamson County. Recently, Inky organized the implementation of an Learning System called Moodle for Williamson County through which employees can learn in a virtual learning environment. Chandler presented an expanded array of functions in Excel and captivated the group with what Excel can do.

The business communications topic was covered by Aaron Alejandro He is Executive Director of the Texas FFA Foundation. In his non professional hours, Aaron consults with businesses, organizations, education and youth clubs about ways to improve organizational and individual performance. He has more than thirty years of experience in management, personal and professional training. He offered a clear message of personal dynamics for successful communication with customers and co-workers.

### Williamson County Extension Calendar

**August 13—Private Applicator Training & Testing**, Training 8 am to 12 noon; Williamson County Extension office

**August 19—Women's Voice In Agriculture Water Issues**, 6 to 9 p.m., Williamson County Extension office

**August 25—Patio Lecture Series, Pond Health and Management**, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Williamson County Extension office

**August 27—eOrganics Webinar: Solar-powered Water Systems for Grazing Operations**, 2-3 p.m., Williamson County Extension Office

**August 29—State Olive Production Program**, 9 am to 2 p.m., Williamson County Extension office

After lunch, Stephen Brueggerhoff engaged the group in identifying changes that each of us can do when dealing with customers that lead to great customer satisfaction. He is an Extension Specialist who manages the Texas Friendly Hospitality Program, training business leaders with a recognized program to enhance delivery of quality customer service. Stephen explored the RA-TERR business model, a simple and effective approach to optimize organizational customer service and increase client satisfaction.

Amy Hays opened up the discussion of how social media fits into Extension education. She is the Texas AgriLife Extension Service emerging technologies specialist, she helps the institutes merge science, technology and learning methods by studying and implementing new technologies that will expand the reach of science to address natural resource issues. She is currently involved in connecting the paths of social media to traditional outreach and education, as well as reaching non-traditional and informal learners.

The final speaker of the day was Dr. Jim Seger who opened up the possibilities in Wordpress that most of us did not know even existed. Segers is the IT Coordinator for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He manages Regional Information Technology Specialists to provide support and IT related training for Extension County Offices statewide. Jim has experience with web site management systems, most recently the Word Press system used by AgriLife offices statewide.

The participants were surveyed via a standardized customer survey with additional unique event questions. Those results include;

The most frequently use social media by the offices represented was Facebook with 41.2 percent, followed by Twitter with 23.5 percent, a blog at 17.6 percent and all other forms at 17.7 percent

For those offices that had a website, they most frequently updated that site monthly 43.8 percent, followed by daily at 18.8 percent

When asked about what generations were represented in their office, the most common were millennial, Gen X and Baby Boomers; Baby Boomers at 36.2 percent, Gen X at 29.8 percent and Millennial at 27.7 percent.

Comments included:

- Aaron Alejandro was awesome, had a great message . Inky Chandler was very knowledgeable about Excel and helped me understand. Amy Hays made things interesting and made me want to learn how to use social media more. Didn't know anything about Wordpress so Jim Sergers was helpful.
- Need to have Intermediate/advanced Excel.
- Would attend if this is offered annually. Use mailchimp. Excellent program.
- Excel presentation did not seem very applicable to TAMA employees. It seemed it catered to county office stuff. The Wordpress presentation was senseless! More would be learned if we had computers in front of us for hands-on learning.
- More interactive content. It would be helpful to have a comput-

er to work on when learning instead of just watching some one demonstrate.

- Plan to visit the Agrilife Extension website more often
- A lot of it was basic information. I'd like to have some more advanced info, specially related to Excel, social media and Wordpress.
- John Males was great. Aaron Alejandro was great. Jim Seger was informative. We need a class for administrative assistants on Wordpress and how to use it.