

Texas A&M Farmers Fight Advocacy Day

C. Carpenter, R. Garetson, B. Gerrish, S. Redgate, B. Yount, and S. Hague
Texas A&M Agronomy Society



UID: 72372

Abstract: The general public has a limited appreciation of agriculture's role in our economy, society, and preservation of our natural resources. Farmer's Fight Advocacy Day (FFAD) is an initiative led by students of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to promote agricultural awareness on the Texas A&M University campus. The main goals of the movement are to debunk misconceptions of agriculture and inform students about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. The Texas A&M Agronomy Society joined the roster of participating organizations with the goal of providing information specifically about soil and crop sciences. Our club strived to educate other students about the impact agronomy has on their lives and of the diverse goals and methods of modern agriculture. In April 2012, we stationed a booth to engage our fellow Aggies with informative posters, soil sample demonstrations, and handouts with statistics about food and farming. We also used social media to promote FFAD and its mission. By planting seeds of knowledge in the minds of students as they passed -by, we hope to advance the appreciation that all farmers deserve. The program is slated to become an annual event, and the Texas A&M Agronomy Society plans to participate in upcoming programs. We will also use the format in other outreach programs to educate K-12 students as well as the general public about the role of agronomy and agriculture in their lives.

OBJECTIVES

- Educate students and community about agriculture
- Provide awareness on the importance of agriculture
- Correct common agricultural misconceptions
- Encourage consumers to ask where and how their food is grown
- Conduct surveys

Mission: To promote agriculture education and awareness through demonstrations using multiple mediums.

APPROACH

Materials:

- Soil demonstrations
- Educational posters, displays and handouts
- Agricultural statistics
- Surveys
- Snacks featuring agricultural facts

Methods:

Preparation for Farmers Fight:

- Advocate training on March 21, 2012 in which we learned how to properly engage consumers about agricultural topics
- Spoke at local elementary schools in the local community about the importance of agriculture and provided coloring books

April 12, 2012- We march into battle:

- Displayed soil samples to demonstrate the most basic fundamentals of agronomy
- Created a poster with facts about agriculture that consumers do not normally consider
- Handed out snacks made from common agronomic crops
- Handed out flyers containing important agronomic information
- Conducted surveys on and off campus asking two questions:
 1. "What is agronomy?"
 2. "On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you believe agriculture affects your daily life?"



BACKGROUND

After having false information about agriculture printed in the campus newspaper, students from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences saw a dire need for agricultural education amongst the student body. A local fraternity, the brothers of the Beta Nu chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho, started an agricultural awareness program that became an overnight sensation among other organizations within the College. On April 12, 2012, the first student led Texas A&M Farmers Fight was declared and "Advocacy Day" was born. Twenty-two student organizations and more than 200 student "advocates" participated in supporting the agriculture community and educating not only the student body but the community as well. The war was on against agricultural ignorance.

INTERNET VIDEOS

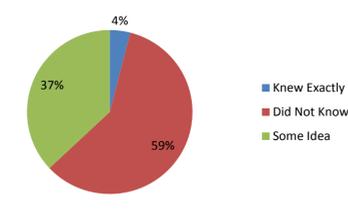


CONCLUSION

The Texas A&M Agronomy Society fought the good fight to end the lack of knowledge about agriculture within the campus community. Our voices were heard and the battle is on. Through Farmers Fight, the Texas A&M Agronomy Society was able to provide the student body and community with a greater understanding of what we do and why we are important. We initially targeted K-12 and college age students with agriculture information through various mediums. Our survey results concluded that although the majority of the public knows agronomy exists as a branch of the agricultural sciences most do not know exactly what agronomy means. Farmers Fight will become an annual event and our club plans on engaging in even more outreach programs with more non-conventional tactics. If more of the public knew the real truth and justification about how food is grown, we could change the tide of public policy. This is a war that none of us can afford to lose.

AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Response to: "What is agronomy?"



After surveying 100 consumers on campus and at our local grocery store, the following statistics were collected:

- Only 4 consumers knew the definition of agronomy
- 59 consumers had no knowledge of what agronomy was
- 37 consumers knew that agronomy related to agriculture

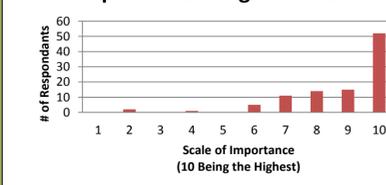
How Agriculture Affects YOU

For each of these products in 2011, the American Farmer was compensated:

- 40 ¢ for a t-shirt (cotton)
- 5 ¢ for a pint of beer (grain & hops)
- 5 ¢ for a 12-pack of crayons (soybean)
- 9 ¢ for a loaf of bread (wheat)
- 3 ¢ for a can of Pepsi (corn)
- 13 ¢ for a pint of ice cream (milk, sugar, eggs)
- 36 ¢ for a cheeseburger (beef, wheat, vegetables)

What a bargain!

Response to the Importance of Agriculture



When consumers were asked how much agriculture affects their daily lives, more than half ranked agriculture as a ten. The average response was an 8.8.

