

October 31, 2013

Memorandum To: All County Extension Agents and Extension Agents – Southeast Extension District 9

From: Dale A. Fritz, Ph.D., District Extension Administrator

Subject: Personnel Updates – Southeast Extension District 9

Accepting Constructive Criticism

The wise man once said, “If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept correction, you will be honored.” One of the hardest things to train ourselves to do, is to accept constructive criticism. Our initial reaction is often to become defensive rather than heed the advice of another. This can be especially true when that criticism comes at an unexpected time, or by an unexpected individual. The fact is, if you show me a successful individual, I will show you an individual who is good at accepting constructive criticism, and very possibly, an individual who is good at accepting ALL criticism.

One of the keys is to view all criticism as constructive. Whether it meant for good, or for harm, there is a lesson to be learned from criticism. Successful individuals learn that lesson. They adapt, they grow, and they become successful by not repeating the mistakes of the past. Criticism can come from a variety of places. It may come from a supervisor, a volunteer, a committee member, or from clientele. No matter the source, we should all listen to and learn from criticism and make adjustments as appropriate. A Wall Street Journal Article by Alina Dizik provides six tips to help you deal with criticism in an effective manner:

- 1) **Take Time to Really Listen** – Don’t dismiss the comments just because they are negative. Remember this is an opportunity to learn and improve, don’t tune it out.
- 2) **Ask Questions** – When criticism is involved, it is easy to misinterpret what is being said. Ask lots of follow-up questions to prevent a bigger misunderstanding or miscommunication.
- 3) **Don’t Get Defensive** – This is a natural reaction and an urge you must fight. Remember, the person telling you this might have a reasonable point, one you will miss if you are trying to think of ways to defend yourself.
- 4) **Stay Calm** – When you are being criticized, it is not time to lose your cool. Focus on the content of the message, and always think about how you can use this information in a positive way.
- 5) **Determine if it is Accurate** – Examine the information you have been given with an open mind. Talk to other co-workers or friends to see if you can determine the validity of the conversation rather than just dismissing it.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
PO Box 2150, Bryan, Texas 77806
Riverside Campus, 3100 State Hwy 47, Bldg. 4431, Bryan, Texas 77807
Tel. 979.845.6800 | Fax. 979.845.6501 | AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu | bryan.tamu.edu

6) **Address the Problem** – When you demonstrate that you can accept the criticism and improve, your co-workers and supervisors will view you in high esteem. They will also know that they can be open and honest with you, which will provide you an opportunity to receive valuable feedback which will benefit you in the future.

Transfers

- **Chadd Caperton**, Jasper County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, has accepted a transfer to the Madison County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources position effective October 7, 2013. Chadd holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from Stephen F. Austin State University and is currently working on a Master's degree also from Stephen F. Austin State University.
- **Dusty Tittle**, Burleson County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, has accepted a transfer to the Brazos County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources position effective November 4, 2013. Dusty holds a Master of Science degree in Agronomy from Texas A&M University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics also from Texas A&M University.

Appointments

- **Brukendra Jackson** has been appointed as the Harris County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources with the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, effective August 15, 2013. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture (Animal Science) from Prairie View A&M University.
- **Damion Turner** has been appointed as the Waller County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources with the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, effective August 15, 2013. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education (Agribusiness/Animal Science) from West Texas A&M University.
- **Joseph Singletary** has been appointed as the Hardin County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, effective November 4, 2013. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from Texas State University. He will complete his First Step Program in Jefferson County and Starla Garlick will serve as his mentor.

Please welcome these new agents to Southeast Extension District 9.

Retirements

- **Marilyn Simmons**, Galveston County Extension Agent - FCS, has retired from her position effective August 31, 2013.
- **Sandra Fry**, Fort Bend County Extension Agent - FCS, has retired from her position effective September 30, 2013.

Open Positions in District 9

The following positions are currently open in Southeast Extension District 9. If you have an interest in transferring to one of the open positions please let me know and apply at GreatJobs website. Also, if you know of any other agent in the state who may be interested in transferring to the best District in the State, please let them know of these vacancies. In addition, if you know of any individual who may have an interest in working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension or the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M, please let them know of these vacancies.

- Burleson CEA-AG/NR
- Fort Bend CEA-FCS
- Galveston CEA-FCS
- Grimes CEA-FCS
- Harris CEA-4-H (AG/Livestock)
- Harris CEA-Urban Youth Development

If you have questions or comments, please let me know.

Dale A. Fritz, Ph.D.
District Extension Administrator
TAMU Riverside Campus Hwy 47 Bldg 4431
P.O. Box 2150
Bryan, TX 77806-2150
979-845-6806 (Office)