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

Our Grand Challenges
Along with other members of The Texas A&M University System, today’s AgriLife Extension and its educators face five grand challenges of the 21st century:
1. Feeding Our World
2. Protecting Our Environment
3. Improving Our Health
4. Enriching Our Youth
5. Growing Our Economy

Extension Agents will meet our grand challenges in many ways...

Advancing Agriculture
Working with Extension specialists, county Extension agents will demonstrate and teach proven practices and technology to help farmers and ranchers improve crop and livestock systems, reduce risks, and enhance the sustainability of agricultural lands. We will also provide services such as soil and water testing, and plant disease diagnostics. By advancing agriculture, we will help to feed growing populations in Texas and around the world.

Expanding Horticulture
We expand best practices in horticulture through our gardening and landscape programs – by teaching EarthKind® growing methods, training Master Gardeners℠, introducing improved plant varieties, and supporting local growers and markets.
Protecting Natural Resources

To safeguard our state's natural resources, AgriLife Extension conducts conservation and stewardship programs which reduce drought impacts, reclaim and preserve water quality, minimize wildfire risks, and maximize water supplies. We help restore damaged lands and protect wildlife habitats. And we promote integrated practices for pest management in both rural and urban environments.

Improving Health

Through nutrition and health education, AgriLife Extension helps Texans fight obesity and manage chronic diseases, improve meal planning and food budgeting, and increase food safety at home. We also train certified food handlers to help protect Texas consumers.

Strengthening Families

To strengthen families, our programs in Family and Consumer Sciences educate parents and caregivers, train day-care providers, demonstrate home and child safety, teach money management, and promote fitness for all ages and lifestyles.

Developing Youth

For generations, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University have conducted youth development programs, including Texas 4-H. Across our state, we offer hand-on learning projects and school enrichment curricula, engaging nearly 600,000 youth every year. We give young people opportunities to learn responsibility and leadership and develop a spirit of service. And we help them prepare for college and the workforce – crucial steps in today's economy.

Growing Communities

Whether preventing or mitigating problems, improving profitability, reducing costs, or enhancing quality of life, all Extension programs make an economic impact and create significant return on investment. For more targeting economic development, we help Texas communities grow by supporting entrepreneurship, developing leaders, providing job-related continuing education, and helping people get back on their feet through disaster recovery education and assistance.
**Appointments**

- **Fallon Foster** has been appointed as the Orange County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences, effective April 14, 2014. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Community Health from Lamar University. She plans to continue her Master of Science Degree Program in Promotion of Health also from Lamar University. Amy Ressler will serve as her mentor. Fallon previously served as a BLT Program Assistant in Orange County and currently is employed by the Southeast Texas Food Bank. Please welcome this new agent to Southeast Extension District 9.

- **Xiomora Diaz-Vargas** has been appointed as the Harris County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development (Livestock and Agriculture), effective April 15, 2014. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Husbandry from the University of Puerto Rico and a Master of Science Degree in Human Resources from Metropolitan University in Puerto Rico. Xiomora currently serves as the Marion County Extension Agent – 4-H in Florida and previously served as a County Extension Agent – Agriculture in Puerto Rico. Please welcome this new agent to Southeast Extension District 9 and Texas.

**Transfer**

- **Christina Perez**, Hidalgo County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development, has accepted a transfer to the Orange County Extension Agent – 4-H and Youth Development position effective April 14, 2014. Christina holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Development from Texas A&M University and a Master of Science Degree in Agricultural and Extension Education from University of Tennessee. Please congratulate Christina on this transfer and welcome her to District 9.

**Retirement**

- **Dr. Linda Willis**, Harris County Extension Director, has announced her retirement from her position effective March 31, 2014. I wish her the very best in her retirement and future endeavors. Thank you for your many contributions to the Harris County Extension Program. Linda will return to AgriLife Extension in a part-time role on May 19, 2014 as a Program Specialist – Urban Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives.

**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 the 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.

- Fort Bend CEA-FCS
- Fort Bend EA-FCS-CEP
- Galveston CEA-FCS
- Harris CED
- Waller EA-4-H-CEP
If you have questions or comments, please let me know.

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