Walk Across Texas! is an eight-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas! is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services. In 2011, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Education Agency (TEA) partnered to offer the 3rd Annual TEA/ISD Walk Across Texas! Challenge. The goal of the challenge was to motivate the Texas Education Agency, independent school district (ISD) employees, students and their families to move more and have fun!

**Relevance**

- 27% of Texans are obese.
- 29% of American adults are not physically active at all.
- Only 25% of adults and 27% of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- Texas ranks 9th in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 13th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 7th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.

- Higher levels of fitness are associated with better academic performance, better school attendance, and fewer disciplinary incidents.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

**Response**

The Walk Across Texas! program was designed to help establish the habit of regular physical activity. For eight weeks, teams of eight people, school classes, or individuals walk 830 miles across a map of Texas.

- Visit [http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu](http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu).
- The program begins with an AgriLife Extension agent forming a community task force with members from targeted groups such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- Plan Kick-Off, Mid-Way, and Recognition activities.
- Train site managers, captains, teachers, and other volunteer helpers.
- Register participants online.
- Walk for eight weeks.
- Enter mileage online.
• Provide recognition for the team walking the most miles and the team reaching the “destination” (830 miles) first.

Results
Walk Across Texas! significantly increases participants’ physical activity. During the eight-week TEA/ISD Walk Across Texas! Challenge held September 13 through November 30, 2011, the following participation was noted:

• 15 Texas counties had teams participate in the TEA/ISD Challenge.
• 12 of the 13 districts had at least one school participate in the TEA/ISD Challenge.
• 94 TEA participants logged 17,510 miles.
• 211 ISD teams logged 31,245 miles.
• 434 school teams logged 690,455 miles.
• Approximately 66% of TEA staff surveyed reported that of the activities being offered, they enjoyed participating in the Walk Across Texas! program the most.

The 4th Annual TEA/ISD Walk Across Texas! Challenge is scheduled for September 2012 and will once again coincide with Obesity Awareness Week.