



# Plugged-in to Nutrition

<http://fcs.tamu.edu/food-and-nutrition/lets-get-social/>

## Helping Texans Better Their Lives

### Relevance

In the U.S., 8 out of 10 Internet users search for health information online, and 74% of these people use social media. In any given month, more than one million Texans searched health, nutrition, diet, or food, on the Internet.

However, there is a critical need for evidence-based nutrition information on the Internet. Responsible social media messages should be clear, current and consistent with peer-review science. In addition to traditional workshops and face-to-face methods of programming, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) online learning offers alternative educational opportunities.



### Response

Members of the AgriLife Extension Food and Nutrition Unit developed online courses, Facebook pages, YouTube videos, and informational graphics (infographics) to reach non-traditional audiences.

#### *Online Courses*

Online courses offer convenience for clients seeking required professional development opportunities. Professional development courses for food service workers, nutrition educators, and childcare givers were developed. The topics include food safety, child nutrition, and obesity — as well as other general and trending nutrition topics. Web access is available at: <http://extensiononline.tamu.edu>.

#### *Social Media*

Social media has become an emerging tool to help programs connect directly to community partners, clients, and to enhance face-to-face program efforts. The Facebook pages direct audiences to banner programs, including: Food Protection Management, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, and *Dinner Tonight!* YouTube videos and infographics were created to inform and engage audiences on trending topics, such as food preservation and safety, as well as basic nutrition. Web access is available at: <http://fcs.tamu.edu/food-and-nutrition/lets-get-social/>.

## Results

### *Online Courses*

During 2016, 12,973 clients completed an online course from the 39 Food and Nutrition courses available. The following is a list of popular course offerings and the number of people who completed that course:

1. *Texas Food Handlers Course: Food Safety It's in Your Hands; English; 3,561*
2. *Food Safety in the Classroom; 987*
3. *Smart Goals for a Smarter Weight; 510*
4. *Nutrition Essentials #1: Overview; 344*
5. *Mini Talks about Mini Folks: Frequently Asked Questions on Child Nutrition; 344*
6. *Old Wives' Tales: Myths About Feeding Children; 533*
7. *Nutritional Risk Assessment – DETERMINE; 414*
8. *Understanding the Dates on Food Labels; 1,069*
9. *Feeding Young Children with Special Needs; 368*
10. *Texas Food Handlers Course: Food Safety It's in Your Hands; Spanish; 598*

### *Facebook*

During 2016, the *Texas Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program* Facebook page was pilot tested in Harris and Cameron Counties. More than 330 clients engaged in unique health promotional messages on diet quality, food safety, food budgeting, and physical activity. Food Protection Management posted 1,972 messages on food recalls, food safety, and information related to class offerings through Facebook, and compiled 133 tweets through Twitter.

### *YouTube*

In 2016, the Food and Nutrition Unit continued to create short educational videos, as well as supporting infographics for videos. In the last year, 3,245 clients viewed the *TAMU Food and Nutrition Extension* YouTube channel, resulting in more than 86 shares. A total of six videos and five infographics were produced and released, with a total of 17 videos. The following is a list of popular videos released this year and the number of client views:

1. *Food Face-Off: Sweet Potato vs. Russet Potatoes; 348*
2. *Understanding the New Nutrition Food Label; 255*
3. *Finding the Perfect Dates: Understanding Food Date Stamps; 222*
4. *Food Face-Off: Pumpkin Pie vs. Pecan Pie; 217*
5. *Meat Packaging in 8 Steps; 182*

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