

Jim Mazurkiewicz

Summary of Experiences

Currently, I serve as professor, Extension specialist and leadership program director for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System. I obtained my Bachelor of Science in animal science from Texas A&M University (1977), Master of Education from Texas Tech University (1986) and doctorate in animal science from Texas A&M University (1995).

My Extension career began in 1978 as an assistant agent–agriculture and 4-H coordinator in Guadalupe County. Afterward, I served in Knox, Ector and Brazos counties as County Extension Agent–Agriculture and County Coordinator. For the past 14 years, my main responsibility has been leading and managing the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program, the Leadership Extension faculty development program, and various international outreach programs. Through these programs, a network of future leaders exists on the county, state, national and international level–leaders who understand the issues affecting agriculture, families, youth and community economic development, and who serve as ambassadors for Texas AgriLife Extension and the Texas A&M University System.

To date, there are 308 alumni of the two-year TALL program; 208 graduated during my tenure. They presently hold many leadership roles, including liaison to the White House, staff director for the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, Texas Deputy Comptroller, CEOs of state and national commodity organizations, elected offices, key positions in state agencies, state and national boards and many other prominent positions. The 455 hours of instruction that I organize are comparable to a Master’s degree and cover some 300 state, national and world issue topics. I also incorporated networking opportunities by hosting 10 receptions that introduce each class to more than 2,000 key stakeholders and elected officials. This networking also facilitates a better understanding of the land-grant university system and Extension’s relationship with teaching, research and service.

Leadership Extension, established in 1991, is a competitive 2-year professional development opportunity for AgriLife Extension faculty. Known as SALE-LE, it is underwritten by the San Antonio Livestock Exposition, which is committed to cultivating Extension educators to work with youth, families and volunteers. I can proudly say that we have retained SALE as a founding sponsor by offering a program of the highest quality and relevancy. There have been 251 SALE-LE graduates, 190 of whom graduated during my oversight. Ninety percent of the agency’s leadership positions are filled with SALE-LE graduates. In addition, the agency has experienced 90% retention of SALE-LE graduates, thereby reducing the agency’s hiring and training costs.

As a result of international study seminars, I have developed a working relationship with officials in Mexico and Poland. I helped apply the TALL model to establish the new Mexican Agriculture Leadership Program (MALP), a national program for which I have been invited to serve on the board of directors. I also served as a liaison for the state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico,

and the state of Texas to arrange meetings involving Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples and the Governor of Nuevo Leon to help solve problems and tensions between producers and entities on both sides of the border. Through a TALL study seminar to Poland, I developed a strong relationship that led to hosting 27 key Polish agricultural leaders in Texas to showcase Texas agriculture and the Texas A&M University System. Later, I was invited to speak at the National Corn Days in Skrzelew, Poland, and was awarded the 2011 Medal of Honor by the Polish Minister of Agriculture. I have since begun tentative plans for proposing a faculty exchange between Texas A&M University and the University of Bydgoszcz. Other plans are underway with three Polish governors, who will host a future trip by 25 Texas business leaders to discuss trade between the two countries.

Since accepting my position in April 1998, I have raised 100 percent of all the programmatic monies to implement these programs—more than \$2.3 million from 681 corporate and individual donors. It is my responsibility to oversee planning and conducting a total of 605 teaching hours for the two 2-year programs, which take participants to multiple locations in- and out-of-state and abroad. It requires effective leadership and communication skills to secure funds, address critical issues, identify key leaders/stakeholders and recruit for competitive, comprehensive, intensive leadership programs. My efforts have been recognized and have served as models for similar AgriLife Extension programs, such as the Commissioners Court Leadership Academy, as well as programs elsewhere in Texas A&M AgriLife, the nation and internationally. In 2010, I was awarded with the “Outstanding Leader Award” by the International Association of Programs for Agricultural Leaders in Sterling, Scotland.

As county Extension agent, I implemented 27 new, innovative educational programs and trade shows in three counties. The concept of Extension interpretation on the county level with county, state and federal stakeholders was organized in 1986 and has been emulated throughout Extension. Many of the regional and county educational programs and trade shows have continued to be successful and were early models to secure new fiscal resources. As a result, county court support increased substantially in each of the counties served; a county horticulturist was added in Ector and Brazos counties and fee-based programs established.

Furthermore, I was most instrumental in the passage of the Brazos county bond issue and a Hotel/Motel tax that resulted in a state of the art \$30 million exposition center for Brazos County. This community development project has generated millions of dollars of revenue for the community and has served as a gateway in promoting Texas AgriLife Extension programs, The Texas A&M University System and the Brazos Valley.

During my 33 years of service, I have had the privilege of providing leadership at many levels and have managed change while respecting Extension’s traditional and historical accomplishments. In addition, I have been an advocate for the land-grant system by developing quality, relevant Extension education programs and initiatives to further the agency’s effectiveness, outreach and visibility. Also, I have worked cooperatively with Texas A&M University, agriculture-related state agencies and agriculture colleges within The Texas A&M University System, as well as state, federal and private agencies and organizations.