

**Joint Council of Extension Professionals
2011 Excellence in Teamwork Award**

Title of Project: LSU AgCenter's AgMagic

State/Unit Submitting: Louisiana/LSU AgCenter

Team Leader

Frankie Gould, Professor and Director
Dwayne Nunez, Livestock Show Director
Todd Tarifa, Associate Professor, 4-H

If selected for the award, the check should be payable to:
LSU AgCenter (Memo:AgMagic)

Submitted by team members:

Name	Title	Association Affiliation
Theresia Lavergne	Professor, Animal Science	Epsilon Sigma Phi
Ed Twidwell	Professor, Agronomy	National Association of County Agricultural Agents
Denise Holston	Instructor, 4-H	NAEFCS
Janet Fox	Assoc. Dept. Head, 4-H	NAE4-HA
David Boldt	Instructor, 4-H	NAE4-HA
Dwight Landreneau	Associate Vice Chancellor	NAE4-HA
Mark Tassin	Director, 4-H	NAE4-HA
Neils De Hoop	Professor, Forestry	
Greg Lutz	Professor, Aquaculture	
Tim Schowalter	Professor, Entomology	
Elma Sue McCallum	Specialist, Communications	
John Wozniak	Professor, Communications	
Barb Corns	Professor, Communications	
Betsy Neely	Professor, Communications	

Team leader Todd Tarifa is a member of National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

Team leader Dwayne Nunez is a member of National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

Abstract

The LSU AgCenter's AgMagic is an interactive, visually stimulating, educational experience for children and their families. Kids learn about the important connection among agriculture, the environment and their lives. Since 2004, AgMagic has been held each spring on the LSU AgCenter campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Initiated as an event to build awareness of, and engage young people in, the fascinating world of agriculture while supporting science education, AgMagic provides hands-on, interactive exhibits with take-home educational activities for teachers to reinforce learning in the classroom.

AgMagic is developed as a journey through eight key agricultural exhibit areas: World of Wonder, Farming the Waters, Plant Products, Animals Produce for You, Bugs Rule!, Farm Gate to Dinner Plate, Body Walk and 4-H. Each exhibit area contains research-based information from the LSU AgCenter designed for young children, teachers and other adults. AgMagic encompasses an exhibit area of approximately 31,000 square feet.

Situation Statement

Ag Magic was developed in response to the 2003 Ag Crisis Summit of state agricultural leaders, in which participants identified public awareness of agriculture as the most important challenge facing farmers. Statewide community focus forums conducted by the LSU AgCenter also identified a need to build greater awareness of agriculture, nutrition and health.

As Louisiana's population becomes increasingly urban, we are losing the connection with nature, knowledge of farming and true origins of our food and fiber. AgMagic was designed to provide a learning experience that helps children and adults understand how agricultural products are important to their daily lives and the economy of our state. A greater awareness of the origins of

our food and fiber make for a greater understanding and appreciation of our environment and the agricultural commodities that provide us with nourishment, shelter and clothing.

Since its inception in 2004 in Baton Rouge, AgMagic has expanded to include agricultural awareness events across the state, including Shreveport, Lake Charles, Monroe and Delhi. Plans are in the works to introduce AgMagic to the New Orleans area in September 2012.

No other agricultural education event encompasses the full breadth of Louisiana agriculture like AgMagic. The event presents an engaging, unbiased, non-commercial look at agriculture in Louisiana, with information developed and presented by subject matter experts from the university research and extension system, supported by external partners, volunteers and sponsors. The weeklong event focuses on imparting knowledge and improving the lives of Louisiana's citizens through that knowledge. The event is unique in Louisiana in its scale, audiences served, content and collaborations.

Target Audience

AgMagic is designed to be a learning adventure for a primary audience of children ages 6-12 years old and a secondary audience that includes teenagers, teachers, parents and other adults. The primary audience experiences AgMagic as a fun, educational event with lots of activities, bright colorful exhibits, a walk through the human body, live farm animals, bugs and hands-on experiences. All of these focus on teaching young children about agriculture, nutrition and health, as seen in the eight educational areas. AgMagic also offers an engaging experience for secondary audiences as an information-rich, fun, family event. Older audiences may learn a few things they did not know about agriculture and the environment. While experiencing AgMagic on a different level, they can learn about the role agricultural commodities play in Louisiana's economy, innovative methods for growing vegetables and how to control fire ants. Teenagers

and younger adults can learn about agricultural and healthcare careers. Teachers participate in the learning experience with their students and receive take-home packets for extended education in the classroom. Enhancing greater understanding and appreciation of Louisiana agriculture for all audiences, free LSU AgCenter publications relating to AgMagic topic areas are distributed. Young and old, urban and rural—visitors to AgMagic come from a diverse group of audiences.

Measureable goals

The goals of AgMagic are to increase knowledge and build awareness of Louisiana agriculture, its connection to the environment and important role in the daily lives of Louisiana children and adults. These goals are achieved through a positive educational event that introduces farm animals, wildlife, plants and crops, aquaculture, renewable natural resources, food science and healthy lifestyle practices to Louisiana school children, teachers and families.

Evaluating the success of these goals is achieved through tracking event attendance and pre-and post teacher surveys measuring the knowledge and awareness of Louisiana agriculture that is gained by students attending AgMagic.

Outcomes/Results/Impacts

In 2010, approximately 12,000 children and adults were reached through the AgMagic experience. That represents a 200 percent increase in attendance from the first AgMagic event in 2004. An additional 5,000 children and adults visited AgMagic and ag awareness events across the state. That number is expected to increase this year. Total visitors to AgMagic and ag awareness events since 2004 has been approximately 85,000 children and adults. Pre- and post-attendance teacher surveys for 2010 indicate:

- 94% agreed AgMagic was interactive enough to keep students engaged in the discovery process.
- 69% agreed supporting material received at AgMagic helped reinforce what students learned during the tour.
- 97% agreed that as a result of AgMagic, students have a better understanding of the importance of agriculture to their everyday lives.
- 95% of teachers surveyed agreed the AgMagic experience aligned with classroom objectives.

Extension Team Members

The AgMagic team is formed by extension, research and administrative faculty. The information below includes the role and percent of time each extension team member contributed to AgMagic. Research and additional staff are not included in this information.

Todd Tarifa – 10% -Works with other team leaders and members to coordinate many areas of AgMagic. Responsible for volunteer organization and coordination.

Dwayne Nunez – 8% -Works with Livestock Show Office staff to set up, staff and break down AgMagic. Responsible for construction of many exhibits.

Ed Twidwell – 3% -Coordinates content development and staffing of plants section.

Denise Holston – 3% -Coordinates content development and staffing of The Body Walk.

Theresa Lavergne – 3% -Coordinates the content development and staffing of the animals section. Promotes event through television interviews.

Janet Fox – 2% -Coordinates pre-and post-surveys of teachers and volunteers.

Dwight Landreneau – 2% -Works with team leaders and monitors public day event.

David Boldt – 2% -Serves as 4-H section presenter.

Mark Tassin – 2% -Works with team leaders and supervises 4-H section members.

Collaborations

AgMagic is made possible through the talents and efforts of many people at the LSU AgCenter and outside volunteers, partner organizations and sponsors. Each section of AgMagic has a team composed of research and extension faculty and staff representing several departments and program areas, including 4-H, Animal Sciences, Entomology, Food Science, Human Ecology, Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences, Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology and Renewable Natural Resources. Their expertise is dedicated to providing educational content and hands-on experiences for respective areas. It takes approximately 15 participants to develop and staff each section of the event.

The creative component to AgMagic is developed by the AgCenter's communications staff, a team of five designers, which works closely with department heads, research and extension faculty, administrators and others to create exhibits, fact sheets and interactive activities.

These groups work with the LSU AgCenter Livestock Show Office to set up the event. Last year approximately 130 faculty and staff made the event possible.

AgMagic collaborations extend beyond internal participants to include other organizations, businesses and sponsors. Some of our partners include Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Farm Bureau, USA Rice, Future Farmers of America, Louisiana Arthropod Museum and others. These groups provide additional agricultural expertise and perspective through Ag in the Classroom activities, club exhibits, educational materials, "Bug an Entomologist" feature and other contributions.

Approximately 300 volunteers from a variety of clubs, schools and businesses made AgMagic a success. Volunteers served as tour guides, registration hosts, flow monitors and, at specific

stations, activity hosts and information guides. AgMagic benefitted from the volunteer efforts of the LSU School of Education, LSU School of Sociology, LSU School of Entomology, Louisiana Red Cross, Louisiana Blue Cross/Blue Shield, LSU School of Animal Sciences, LSU School of Kinesiology, LSU Athletic Department, Louisiana County Agent Association, Louisiana 4-H State Executive Board, Louisiana 4-H Volunteer Leader Association, Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents, 4-H Teen Leader Clubs, LSU School of Social Work, America's WETLAND Conservation Corps, LSU AgCenter Information Technology, LSU Block and Bridle Club, School of Biological & Ag Engineering, LSU Pre-Vet Club, and LSU School of Food Science and others. Approximately 2100 volunteer hours were contributed last year. Post-attendance volunteer survey from 2010 indicated the following:

- 82% of AgMagic Volunteers were extremely satisfied/satisfied with their overall Ag Magic volunteer experience.
- 80% of AgMagic volunteers strongly agreed/agreed that their talents and skills were put to good use.
- 90% of AgMagic volunteers strongly agreed/agreed that they were given a meaningful role.
- 90% of AgMagic volunteers strongly agreed/agreed that they would volunteer again for AgMagic in the future.

AgMagic is partially funded by state and foundation funds requiring additional support from businesses, associations and other groups. Sponsors provide monetary and in-kind support each year. Monetary support from outside sponsors last year was \$11,825. In-kind support, in the form of promotional advertising and other contributions totaled approximately \$125,000.

Sponsors included The Advocate Educational Services, WAFB-TV, McDonald's, Albemarle Corporation, East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners, Baton Rouge Parents Magazine, Louisiana Beef Industry Council, Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, Louisiana Agricultural Consultants

Association, Louisiana Crawfish Promotion Board, Louisiana Egg Commission, Louisiana Farm Bureau, Lamar Advertising, Dow Agrosiences, Louisiana Rice Growers Association, Louisiana Forestry Association, Louisiana 4-H Foundation, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, Zapp's Potato Chips, American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists, WalMart, Coca Cola, Albertsons and Brevis.com

Diverse Audiences

The majority of school groups visiting AgMagic were from the Baton Rouge metropolitan area (86% within a 30 mile radius) representing urban, suburban and rural audiences. Visitors came from other cities (14%) as far away as Lake Charles (129 miles) and New Orleans (87 miles). AgMagic is promoted as a free, fun family event and receives visitors representing many age, ethnic, economic and geographic groups within the state. Attracting these audiences is accomplished through press releases sent to all local and surrounding media; teacher postcards sent to all public, home-school and Head Start groups in the Baton Rouge area; promotional billboards, television and print advertising; LSU AgCenter Facebook postings; full-page, color educational/promotional ads in Baton Rouge's daily newspaper; PSAs distributed to Baton Rouge area radio stations; LSU AgCenter website; promotional posters posted at McDonald's restaurants and other area businesses and website postings of AgMagic information on parish school board websites. Visiting school groups represent a diverse group of children from many backgrounds. Of the 5500 registered school group students visiting AgMagic in 2010:

- 51 percent were from public schools
- 37 percent were from private or parochial schools
- 6 percent were from Head Start programs
- 6 percent were from home-school groups



Samples of full page educational/promotional ads for AgMagic
 Total: 5 full pages - Ran 2 times each



Sample digital billboard
 Total: 2 billboards/one month



Sample full page ad
 Parents Magazine
 Total: 1 issue



Sample fact sheets included in teacher packets
 Total packets: 350

LSU AgCenter presenting 2010 AgMagic April 19-25

News Release Distributed 03/23/10

The LSU AgCenter's AgMagic, an event focused on teaching young people about the role of agriculture in their daily lives, will be presented April 19-25 at Parker Coliseum in Baton Rouge.

AgMagic provides an opportunity for children and adults to understand that food, clothing, lumber and other products all are part of the complex agricultural system. It also shows them the important connections among agriculture, the environment and their lives.

"AgMagic is in its seventh year and continues to excite and inform young people about agriculture," said Dr. Bill Richardson, chancellor of the LSU AgCenter. "We hope young people will leave AgMagic with a new appreciation of Louisiana agriculture and knowledge that will help them in their everyday lives.

"We also want them to have a fun, interactive experience. It is a great event that offers something for the entire family," he continued.

Admission to the event is free, and it's open for scheduled school group tours April 19-23. AgMagic is open to the public on the weekend of April 24-25 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The annual event features a variety of interactive exhibits that cover plants, animals, wildlife and other topics. They range from demonstrations showing the growth stages of plants to exhibits designed to help children learn about forestry, aquatic life and more. Children also will be invited to make leaf prints, animal tracks and insect rubbings.

"Agriculture touches all of our lives, and AgMagic is designed to help visitors see the connections between the crops in the fields and the products on the shelves in their grocery stores," said Dr. Paul Coreil, LSU AgCenter vice chancellor and director of extension. "It also helps them understand the abundance of resources in Louisiana and the vital role agriculture plays in our economy."

Among the interactive exhibits at AgMagic:

- "Animals Produce For You" will be an educational area that includes chickens, pigs, goats, sheep, dairy cattle and beef cattle. It will give participants a chance to see what animals eat and the products livestock industry provides. Children also will have an opportunity to see eggs hatch in an incubator.

- "Plant Products" will include a look at cotton, rice and sugarcane from seeds to mature plants. It also will provide a look at how vegetables are grown and how insects contribute to the process. Specialized educational signs will allow visitors to learn about the origin of products they consume, such as that ketchup is made from tomatoes.

- "Farming the Waters" will feature catfish, crawfish, alligators, turtles and ornamental fish, such as koi. Viewing stations will allow visitors to see both habitats and products, and visitors will learn how you "farm" aquatic life.

- The "World of Wonder" will focus on forests, forest products and wildlife. The exhibit will illustrate in a natural-type setting the abundance of natural resources found in our state and offer an opportunity for a "walk through the forest." Visitors will learn what it takes to protect our environment and that the forest products industry is the largest agricultural segment in Louisiana. This exhibit also will include a chance for visitors to view the root system of a tree and to visit with Smokey Bear.

- The Louisiana 4-H section will highlight the youth development program and its "learn by doing" philosophy. Young people can learn about ATV safety and Louisiana's wetlands. Louisiana 4-H is an educational program of the LSU AgCenter designed to help young people develop leadership, citizenship and life skills.

- The popular "Bugs Rule" area will demonstrate the role insects play in agriculture and the environment. It lets participants view bugs up close and has a small greenhouse filled with plants and butterflies. Young people can see mosquitoes, hissing cockroaches and other interesting specimens. It's also the place where kids will be invited to do insect or bug rubbings.

- A new section in AgMagic is "Farm Gate to Dinner Plate." Children will be introduced to food science and can learn about bad bacteria. They also will have an opportunity to help build a "pizza" using Louisiana agricultural products.

In addition to those exhibits, the "Body Walk," an interactive educational exhibit designed to combat childhood obesity, will be available in the 4-H Mini Farm adjacent to Parker Coliseum. Sponsored by the LSU AgCenter and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, it is part of an overall program known as "Smart Bodies."

A weekend feature dubbed "Bug an Entomologist" also will be open for the public April 24-25. It will feature insect experts from the Louisiana State Arthropod Museum, who will be there to answer all your "buggy" questions. Families are encouraged to bring insect samples, photographs or questions that may stump the experts.

Tours for school groups and other groups must be scheduled in advance. Dates and times available for group tours are between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day from April 19 through April 23.

To obtain more information or to schedule a tour, visit www.lsuagcenter.com/AgMagic or phone 225-578-2196

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