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AgriLife Extension agronomist to retire after 32 years

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SAN ANGELO – Dr. Billy Warrick, Texas AgriLife Extension Service professor and agronomist at San Angelo, will end his 32-year career with the agency on Aug. 31.

Warrick has been headquartered at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at San Angelo since Aug. 1, 1989.

“We will sure miss Billy,” said Scott Durham, the district’s AgriLife Extension administrator. “He’s known as the ‘man of many hats’ around here, because he never hesitates to dive in and help anybody with anything at any time. Aside from his vast knowledge of West Texas agronomy, which he readily shares with producers and co-workers alike, he’s also an accomplished photographer and a master at solving computer-related issues.

“Throughout his career, the public and his co-workers were as apt to see Billy teaching safe chemical handling at a 4-H function as they were to see him delivering a keynote address at a national agronomic conference,” Durham said.

“He’s sure not above helping out anyone on any level,” Durham said. “He’s the consummate AgriLife Extension professional and a fine example of what Extension work is supposed to be all about, which is people helping people.”

Warrick earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from West Texas A&M University at Canyon. After 13 years as an AgriLife Extension agent, he earned a doctorate in plant growth and cotton development from Texas Tech University, and soon after accepted the San Angelo agronomy post.

His responsibilities have grown over time to include agronomic educational training for 50 counties. The 515-by-280-mile area contains 846,000 acres of cotton, 903,000 acres of small grains, 373,000 acres of grain sorghum and 193,000 acres of forage crops.

AgriLife Extension has been a big part of Warrick's life since 1967 when he became a Castro County 4-H member, he said. During his career he has made presentations at 950 producer meetings; planned, secured materials and evaluated 1,100 result demonstrations with county AgriLife Extension agents; conducted 195 applied research tests; and authored 226 monthly newsletters, 71 fact sheets and six production guides.

Warrick is a charter lifetime member of the 4-H Alumni Association, a past trustee of the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation, past president of the Texas Extension Specialists Association and a two-time past president of Epsilon Sigma Phi.

His service to AgriLife Extension has earned him numerous awards, including the Superior Service Award; Specialist of the Year in Texas Agriculture; and Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture, both from the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association. He is also a two-time recipient of the Distinguished Service to Extension Award presented by the 15-state Southern Region of Extension services.

Warrick said he feels he has three families: his church, immediate family and his Extension family. That won't change after he retires, he said, but he does foresee some reshuffling of the time and effort he expends toward each of them in the future.