



Subscribe



March 2018

Spring is Around the Corner

With spring just a week away, I'm reminded that the most bountiful time of year is almost here! Spring represents new growth and opportunity for the future. It's a busy time for our farmers and ranchers, and in our agriculture industry. It's also a great time to get outside with the kiddos and perhaps plant a garden. In doing so, you can connect with the earth and teach children where their food comes from.

This land that we live on provides us with blessings beyond words, and one of our biggest priorities here at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is cultivating the connection young Texans have with agriculture. It's about teaching them where their food comes from and what it takes to get meals on their plates. That's why School Breakfast Week, which happened just last week, is so important, and why we work with schools to build connections to incorporate locally grown food into school meals through our Farm Fresh initiative.

As we enjoy the fruit of agriculture's labor this spring and summer, let us remember each day where our food comes from and why *Texas agriculture matters!*

Your servant,

Sid Miller

Time Remains to Respond to 2017 Census of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) needs a Census of Agriculture response from **all** the nation's producers. In order to get an accurate representation of American agriculture — of all farmers and ranchers across the country — NASS will continue to accept completed census questionnaires through spring. NASS has heard that some producers need extra time due to planting, bad weather or gathering necessary end-of-year documents.

All operations are important, and every response matters. NASS is committed to giving producers every opportunity to be represented in this widely-used data. Federal law mandates that everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire complete it and return it, even if they are not currently farming. NASS will follow-up through mailings, phone calls and farm visits with producers who have not yet responded.

To avoid these additional contacts, farmers and ranchers are encouraged to complete their census either online [here](#) or by mail as soon as possible. For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, click [here](#). For questions about or assistance filling out the census, producers can call (888) 424-7828.

Texas Students Got a Jump on the Day for School Breakfast Week

During National School Breakfast Week, TDA's theme *Dive into a Healthy Breakfast* encouraged students to start the day with a healthy meal in the cafeteria. Schools across Texas used TDA resources like selfie stations and participation charts to engage students and make breakfast a special occasion just last week. TDA also provided menus that featured recipes using Texas products so students could learn how Texas agriculture can make a good breakfast even better. All these materials supported school nutrition teams and their work to energize students' appreciation for the nutritious and appealing breakfasts served in Texas schools.



Research has shown real results for students who increased their participation in the school breakfast program. These students showed significantly greater increases in their math grades and significantly greater decreases in the rates of school absence and tardiness than children whose participation remained the same or decreased. Excelling in school by eating something healthy and tasty is a win-win for the more than 1.7 million Texas children eating school breakfast.

All of the 2018 National School Breakfast Week materials featured artwork inspired by winners in TDA's 2017-2018 [You ART What You Eat](#) statewide student art contest. TDA is currently accepting entries for the 2018-2019 contest. Students in all Texas schools participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are encouraged to enter. For more information or to access TDA's School Breakfast Week online toolkit, please visit [SquareMeals.org/SBW](#).

Reminder: Grant Deadlines Approaching

Expanding the 3E's Grant Program: Application Deadline: March 21

TDA is currently accepting applications for our Expanding the 3E's Grant Program, which helps schools increase awareness of the importance of good nutrition, especially for children, as well as encourages children's health and well-being through TDA's *3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right*. Public and charter school campuses across Texas can apply for these grants for nutrition education efforts for students. The deadline to submit an application is March 21, 2018. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Young Farmer Grant Program: Application Deadline: March 22

Are you currently creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas? Consider applying for the 2018 Young Farmer Grant (YFG) program. This initiative is administered by TDA under the direction of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA). The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance in the form of dollar-for-dollar matching grant funds to individuals between the age of 18 and 46 who are engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas.

Additional details, instructions and 2018 YFG Round 2 application materials can be found [here](#). Applications are due by the close of business (5 p.m. CT) on March 22, 2018.

Rodeo Action Continues Through March

Are you ready to see the greatest show on dirt? Head out to a local rodeo, and enjoy some hoofs, hair, hides and horns! Plus, be sure to stop by our GO TEXAN booths at each of these rodeos:

- Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: Feb. 27 – March 18
 - Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show: March 8 – 18
 - Rodeo Austin: March 10 – 24
-



Listen to the Latest *Texas Agriculture Matters* Episodes

Each week, Commissioner Miller and TDA are proud to bring the listeners of KRFE AM 580 in Lubbock a new episode of *Texas Agriculture Matters*. For those of you not in the Lubbock area, don't worry — we got you covered! [Check out](#) the latest episodes of *Texas Agriculture Matters*.

“TEXAS
AGRICULTURE
Matters!”