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August 2017

## Summer is Coming to a Close

While the summer heat is still on, it's getting close to back-to-school time for many young Texans. It's an exciting time, as the new school year holds so much promise for many students. I'm proud of the work our Summer Food Service Program providers have done this summer to ensure that kids return to school well-fed and ready to learn. I'm also excited for another year of our Farm Fresh Fridays program and to continue connecting young people across the state with agriculture and the people who grow our food.

As I look back on the summer, it's been a bountiful time of year for our farmers and ranchers. The summer vegetables and produce we've had at local farmers markets has been top-notch — just like you'd expect from something that's grown in Texas. Cotton producers in the Valley are already harvesting, and before you know it, fall harvest will be in full swing in the Panhandle.

There are few things better than harvest time, as our farmers reap the benefits of their hard work and labor. Remember friends, at least three times a day for the rest of your life, you'll need a farmer. Join me as we thank them for all that they do, and remember, *Texas agriculture matters.*

Your servant,

Sid Miller

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## Young Farmers Receive Grants to Boost Operations

Commissioner Miller, along with the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority Board, announced grant awards for 10 young farmers and ranchers totaling more than \$155,000 through the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) Young Farmer Grant program. These dollar-for-dollar matching grant awards are part of a larger effort to promote and sustain Texas' position as an agricultural powerhouse, as well as support younger ag producers. Applicants received between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to complete their projects.

The types of projects selected for funding this round included: viticulture, hydroponics, horticulture, an apiary, and various types of livestock and crop operations.

One of the grant recipients, Kamlesh Shukla, plans to use his grant funds to start up a hydroponic operation using a pre-fabricated shipping container to grow crops in the highly populated Collin County. Shukla wants to use his background in information technology to transition to cutting-edge farming. His hydroponic setup will allow him to produce commercially grown food year round using only 10 gallons per day and no pesticides. Shukla is one of our young farmers doing great work to produce the food we need to sustain our lives.

For a complete list of award recipients and more information about the program, click [here](#).

TDA anticipates the next round of funding for the Young Farmer Grant program in the coming months. Send us an [email](#) to be added to the notification list and be one of the first to know about future grant opportunities.

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## Spotlight: GO TEXAN Ambassadors

Commissioner Miller is excited to partner with former NFL players to promote our GO TEXAN program and its members. GO TEXAN is all about shining the spotlight on the products, culture and communities that call Texas home, and we couldn't be more proud to have these football stars on board as GO TEXAN ambassadors who are spreading the word about GO TEXAN and leaving a little Texas pride behind everywhere they go.

Just last week, Commissioner Miller joined pro football greats — former Dallas Cowboy and two-time Super Bowl Champion Billy Davis; former wide receiver Byron Williams; former Dallas Cowboy pro-bowler and champion Flozell Adams; and former NFL defensive back and Amarillo native Hurlles Scales — at the NFL Players Association Meeting in Ft. Worth to talk about ways to promote Texas products.



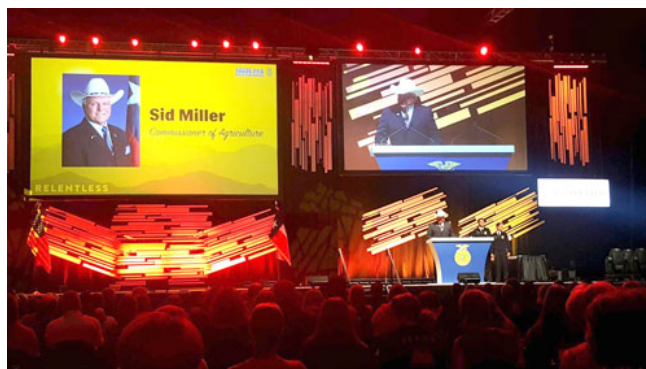
## ICYMI: Rice Deal With China, Commissioner Sworn in as VP of Southern Trade Association, FFA Convention Convenes in Corpus Christi

Last month, Commissioner Miller expressed his support for a new deal that will allow the U.S. to export rice to China for the first time in history.

“Here in Texas, we are looking forward to exporting rice to China,” Commissioner Miller said. “The Texas rice industry has been around since the 1880s and now produces about 140,000 acres annually. Rice production and processing contribute more than \$140 million to the Texas economy each year and helps keep our wetlands intact while providing a vital habitat for wildlife.” [Read](#) the full statement.

Commissioner Miller was elected as vice president of the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) at their 2017 annual conference. SUSTA, which is comprised of 16 southern state departments of agriculture, helps small companies in the southern U.S. promote value-added food and agricultural products to foreign markets. [Read](#) the full announcement.

In July, FFA members from across the state convened for their annual convention in Corpus Christi. Commissioner Miller had a blast speaking to FFA leaders and encouraging these young Texans to continue developing their leadership skills and making a positive impact on our state.



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## Listen to The Latest *Texas Agriculture Matters*

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 have you covered. Check out the latest episodes of *Texas Agriculture Matters* [here](#). Whether you want to know about international trade, NASCAR and GO TEXAN, or the State Fair of Texas, you'll find it all in *Texas Agriculture Matters*!

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## Nutrition Grants Announced For Public Schools Promoting Better Nutrition

Commissioner Miller and TDA are pleased to announce grant awards for nine public school systems across Texas totaling \$202,500 through the Expanding the 3E's (X3E) Grant Program.

X3E is one of two programs that support TDA's initiative to promote better health and nutrition and prevent obesity among children in Texas. These grants help do this by increasing awareness of the importance of good nutrition, especially for children, and encouraging health and well-being through the *3E's of Healthy Living - Education, Exercise and Eating Right*.



The nine public schools that received grant funding will use it to supplement or extend coordinated health programs, as well as activities that supplement or extend Farm Fresh Fridays initiatives, including farm-to-school educational activities like garden-based learning and classroom lessons.

Northside ISD is striving to implement the Farm Fresh Fridays program through garden-based learning, along with agriculture and nutrition education classroom lessons. Within the school

district, nine elementary schools will each build and maintain five raised garden beds. The district will work in partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, San Antonio Food Bank and local farmers to improve students' understanding of nutrition and develop the knowledge and skills needed to meet state science standards.

TDA anticipates the next round of funding will be in Spring 2018. For additional information, contact TDA's Grants office by [email](#).



Starting **Sept. 1**, TDA will begin accepting applications for the *Texans Feeding Texans - Home-Delivered Meal Grant Program*. This program was established to help supplement and extend current home-delivered meal programs for seniors and/or disabled Texans. [Download](#) your application on TDA's website today and get a head start!

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## Commodity Supplemental Food Program Makes a Difference for Texas Seniors

Thousands of low-income seniors across Texas receive nutrition, education and inspiration in the box of food they receive each month through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) — a program administered by TDA in Texas. This month, we are planning to connect our food bank partners with enough U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) products to make almost 50,000 CSFP boxes available to Texas seniors in need.

Additionally, we are excited to have recently added the Southeast Texas Food Bank as a partner in the program. By working with them, TDA will bring more good nutrition to seniors in the greater Beaumont area. The Southeast Texas Food Bank joins the South Texas Food Bank, Central Texas Food Bank, East Texas Food Bank, Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Houston Food Bank, North Texas Food Bank and San Antonio Food Bank as our CSFP partners.

This winter, two more partners — High Plains Food Bank in Amarillo and South Plains Food Bank in Lubbock — will join TDA in this endeavor. The program offers all these food banks one more tool for improving the health of vulnerable Texans.

These food banks put approximately 35 pounds of USDA products in the boxes and distribute them to their partners at churches, community centers and other facilities accessible to older Texans. Along with the food, the seniors receive nutrition education about why eating healthy is important. Then, program participants can take the food home and prepare it as needed. The food provides a welcome supplement to the seniors' existing resources and offers them a healthy learning experience that is valuable at any age.