



Subscribe



September 2017

Help Your Neighbors in Need

The last few weeks have not been easy on our fellow Texans. Hurricane Harvey hit the Texas Coast as a Category 4 storm and left behind unbelievable destruction. I've witnessed firsthand the suffering of our neighbors along the coast — they are hurting. Some have lost everything. Now is the time that we should show our true Texan spirit and join together to help those in need.

From initial reports, our cotton farmers in the Upper Coastal Bend are among the hardest hit in the agriculture community. Rice producers had already harvested about 75 percent of this year's crop, but many storage bins endured extensive wind and water damage. We are only just beginning to know the extent of the damage. That's why we need to ban together to support our farmers and ranchers as they begin to rebuild.

One way to do that is by donating to the [State of Texas Agriculture Relief \(STAR\) Fund](#). This money — 100 percent of it — goes directly to helping farmers and ranchers rebuild after disasters. I encourage you to donate today — every bit helps and will go directly to our ag producers.

I want to personally let every person who has been affected by Hurricane Harvey know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. Texas will come back from this tragedy stronger than ever.

Your servant,

Sid Miller

Latest Hurricane Harvey News

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is doing its best to keep everyone informed about the latest efforts to help victims of Hurricane Harvey. You can find the latest news from TDA on everything from the STAR Fund to what's happening with school meals in disaster areas on our [website](#).

- [Texas Department of Agriculture Responds to Hurricane Harvey](#)
- [Commissioner Miller Authorizes School Meals at No Cost in Federal Disaster Areas](#)
- [Commissioner Miller Calls for Donations to STAR Fund After Hurricane Harvey](#)
- [Food and Nutrition: Hurricane Harvey Updates](#)



Donate Today: STAR Fund Helps Farmers and Ranchers

As residents along the Texas coast begin cleanup efforts after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, Commissioner Miller is calling on others to donate to the STAR Fund and lend a helping hand to those ag



producers devastated by this historic storm.

The STAR Fund was created to collect monetary contributions from private individuals and businesses to assist farmers and ranchers in responding to and recovering from natural disasters. Farmers and ranchers can apply for the STAR Fund and receive assistance for rebuilding perimeter fences, paying for livestock burial costs, restoring operations and assisting with other agricultural relief efforts — basically

anything that isn't covered under federal farm assistance or insurance programs. Every single dollar donated to the STAR Fund is disbursed to ag producers in areas under a disaster declaration.

"Hurricane Harvey caused devastation and losses like we've never seen before in our lifetime," Commissioner Miller said. "Farmers and ranchers throughout the Coastal Bend and along the Texas coast are trying to pick up the pieces and figure out what to do next to rebuild. That's where the STAR Fund comes into play and why it was created — to help folks out with things federal money and insurance won't cover."

Make your [donation](#) to the STAR Fund today, and help a farmer or rancher in need!

The Countdown is on: State Fair of Texas Only Weeks Away

[The State Fair of Texas](#) is officially only a few weeks away, and our GO TEXAN team couldn't be more excited! Opening day is set for **Sept. 29**, and we can't wait. TDA is setting up in the GO TEXAN Pavilion for the State Fair, and we're excited for you to shop in the Pioneer Brand GO TEXAN General Store. You'll find the best made-in-Texas products and goods in the store, and we have plenty of live entertainment and activities lined up for visitors inside the Pavilion. [Follow](#) GO TEXAN on Facebook for the latest happenings on the State Fair, including which GO TEXAN members will be in the General Store.

The State Fair runs through Oct. 22, so be sure to plan your visit to Dallas. A trip to the State Fair wouldn't be complete without a stop in the GO TEXAN Pavilion. We'll see you in Dallas!



ICYMI: Protecting Yourself at The Fuel Pump

Credit card skimmers are increasingly becoming a problem across the state. Let's face it, no one wants their credit card information "skimmed" when they're paying at the pump. We put together a short video with Commissioner Miller that offers quick tips and a few tricks to help you avoid becoming a victim of credit card thieves. [Check](#) it out today.



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* [here](#). Whether you want to know about credit card skimmers, pesticide drift or Farm Fresh Fridays, you'll find it all in the latest episodes of *Texas Agriculture Matters*!

Commissioner Miller Announces Fee Reductions

As a result of the efficiencies and cost savings under his administration, Commissioner Miller has directed TDA staff to find cuts in fees administered by the agency.

"I've been able to achieve some cost savings and managed our budget well, so just like a business, we're passing that along to our ag producers and taxpayers by way of fee reductions," said Commissioner Miller. "Our primary mission at TDA is to ensure that our ag producers and the ag industry are successful and thriving. As we know, when Texas agriculture succeeds, all of Texas succeeds."

Since taking office in January 2015, Commissioner Miller has implemented several new programs that have resulted in cost savings to the agency, including cutting unnecessary spending and bringing new businesses into compliance with state licensing requirements.



Read the full announcement [here](#).

Texas Kids *Jump With Jill* This Fall



TDA is making back-to-school time extra special for the kids at 20 schools scattered across the eastern half of the Lone Star State. This fall, these elementary school students will learn about healthy lifestyles while dancing and singing with the stars of the *Farm Fresh Jump with Jill Live Tour*. The live action assembly transports children to a place where eating right and exercising are not only the right things to do, they also are the cool things to do.

Through this live tour, kids will learn the importance of Texas agriculture and eating local foods. In addition to

the assemblies, the *Jump with Jill* team is conducting taste testing on fresh local foods for students in a select third grade class at many of the schools. Students will have the opportunity to taste bell peppers, watermelon and low-fat cheese. All school districts hosting the *Farm Fresh Jump with Jill Live Tour* receive a Farm Fresh Crate for each elementary school in the district. It includes educational posters and morning announcements that support the healthy eating messages taught through *Jump with Jill*.

Everyone will have a chance to get in on the fun at a special performance of the *Farm Fresh Jump with Jill Live Tour* at the State Fair of Texas on Oct. 13. For more information and access to downloadable educational materials, click [here](#).

Grants Promote Healthy Lifestyles For Lone Star Kids

The kids at Luv 'N' Care Learning Center are in a pickle ... and that's a good thing. These kids helped the center's staff grow cucumbers that were made into pickles and served with their hamburgers. This fun lesson in nutrition and agriculture was supported by a TDA Establishing the 3E's (E3E) grant the child care center received in 2015. This year, TDA awarded E3E grants to nine child care providers, and we can't wait to see what they accomplish. The name of the grant comes from TDA's *3E's of Healthy Living — Education, Exercise and Eating Right*.

The objective of E3E is to increase awareness of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles, especially among children. Five of this year's grants went to child care centers using the funds as an avenue to earn a bronze, silver or gold level award through TDA's Healthier Child and Adult Care Food Program Recognition Award. Luv 'N' Care Learning Center used its grant to earn a bronze award.

An important part of this particular program is ensuring the centers can continue to teach kids about healthy lifestyles after they've put the funds to use. That is why we are so proud of the work that Luv 'N' Care Learning Center continues to do. To learn more about this award, click [here](#), and to learn more about the E3E grants, click [here](#).

To view a full list of awardees, click [here](#).