



August 2016

## Check Out What TDA Has Been Up To!

It's an exciting time in today's agriculture industry! We've been blessed with rain, our farmers and ranchers continue to innovate, and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is working hard each day to protect our most valuable commodities — food and fiber. Since last year, I've had the distinct privilege of leading this organization as Agriculture Commissioner. It's a responsibility I don't take lightly, and I'm excited to share with you some of the accomplishments we've achieved since January 2015.

From Operation Maverick — a statewide initiative to identify and bring unregistered scales into compliance — to our Farm Fresh Initiative — an effort to connect local farmers and ranchers with Texas schools — we have been hard at work! I'm proud to say more than \$73 million has been awarded to rural communities for infrastructure improvement. The GO TEXAN program continues to help market Texas-made, Texas-produced goods across the globe. Our international trade initiatives have coordinated activities on every continent except Antarctica. But give us time!

The list goes on and on, and I want you to see where it leads. Check out how TDA is fulfilling its mission and working for taxpayers like you. Click [here](#) to read more, and remember friends, we're working hard every day to make sure folks at home and across the globe know that *Texas agriculture matters!*

Your servant,

Sid Miller

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## Join Us On Facebook Live!

TDA is excited to venture into the world of Facebook Live. We have a special announcement coming about the State Fair and GO TEXAN. We hope you can join us on **Thursday, Aug. 11, at 10 a.m.** We'll be streaming live with Commissioner Miller from right here in Austin on TDA's [Facebook](#) page.

You won't want to miss this! Be sure to join us, and [RSVP](#) here.



## Quarantine Issued, Town Hall Meeting Held on Emerald Ash Borer in Harrison County



As you may know, TDA recently issued a quarantine in Harrison County after the discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) — an invasive pest that devastates native populations of ash trees. To spread the word and get help from the community, TDA, along with the Texas Forest Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), hosted a Town Hall Meeting on July 25. The successful town hall provided an excellent forum to educate the public on how to do their part to stop the spread of EAB and protect Texas forests.

EAB is a beetle that attacks North American species of true ash species, and tree death occurs three-to-five years following initial infestation. Adult EABs are a metallic green color and about one-half inch long and one-eighth inch wide. This makes them hard to detect in the wild. EABs are native to Asia, and the detection in Harrison County is the first in Texas.

To prevent this highly damaging pest from moving across the state, residents are asked not to move firewood, along with ash wood or wood products including nursery stock, lumber, waste, compost and chips, out of Harrison County. Any firewood purchased locally in Harrison County must be burned in the county, and firewood purchased while traveling should be burned at that site or disposed of prior to returning back to Harrison County.

Questions about EAB? Click [here](#) for more on how you can do your part to stop the spread of EABs.

## ICYMI: The Summer of Good Nutrition



It's been a summer of good nutrition here at TDA. Just last month, our Food and Nutrition Division hosted two important events focused on creating healthier environments for Texans of all ages.

For the first one, TDA welcomed Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsors from around the state to the 2016 CACFP Conference where sponsors learned more about important new USDA nutrition regulations. They also had the opportunity to network and attend training classes on topics ranging from implementing Farm to Child Care and preparing fresh vegetables to tracking expenses and creating enrollment records. In a survey of attendees, 97 percent said they learned more about how to run the program successfully.

Next up was TDA's "Team Up for School Nutrition Success" workshop. Experts from USDA, the University of Mississippi's Institute of Child Nutrition, TDA and Texas Education Service Centers worked with child nutrition directors and school cafeteria managers from across Texas in intensive mentor-driven, peer-to-peer learning sessions and facilitated best practice sharing. In the end, providers walked away with district-based action plans designed to create healthier school environments in Texas.

If those two conferences haven't kept us busy enough, TDA continues to promote and support our Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). While summer vacation is almost over, SFSP sponsors are still serving nutritious meals at sites across Texas. Kids 18 and younger can enjoy free, nutritious meals with their friends. Remember, you can find a site near you by doing one of the following:

- Call 211 to speak to a live operator,
- Visit [www.SummerFood.org](http://www.SummerFood.org) for an interactive site locator map or

Text FOODTX to 877-877.



## Grants Help Schools Buy New Kitchen Equipment



Texas school nutrition professionals depend on hardworking ovens, coolers, serving lines and other big equipment to serve some 5 million nutritious meals every school day. To help cafeteria staff replace equipment that has been worn down by the strain of all those meals, TDA has awarded grant funds to 116 school food authorities in Texas. This money can be used to buy pieces of equipment valued at \$5,000 or more. These grant funds are part of the Fiscal Year 2016 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities.

Nationwide, USDA distributed \$30 million to state agencies, and the allocation for Texas totaled \$3,726,177. The equipment purchased with this funding will be used at 167 food preparation sites and includes ovens, food processors, refrigerators and more. In 2014 and 2015, TDA awarded National School Lunch Program equipment grant funding allocations of more than \$7.5 million for nearly 600 projects in Texas.

By distributing funds from these USDA grants, TDA helps ensure Texas schools continue providing excellent customer service while serving young Texans the safe, healthy and appealing food they need to succeed. Click [here](#) for a list of award winners.

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## Operation Maverick Makes The News



Want to learn more about how TDA protects Texas consumers? [Check out](#) the latest article in the *Texas Tribune*, Ag Commissioner Takes on Weighty Issue, to learn more about TDA's Operation Maverick and how the department is working to make sure all businesses register any scales used to conduct business with Texans. TDA is here to make sure you get what you pay for as a consumer.

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## Teaching Texans To Be Water Smart While Giving Back to Communities

With the August heat in full force, now is the time to think about water conservation and utilizing smart watering techniques. TDA has partnered with the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and Texas Water Smart Coalition to create greenspaces dedicated to retirees, where visitors can sit, relax and learn all about water smart plants and techniques. The most recent town to benefit from this program is Nacogdoches, and we're working with the towns of Chandler, Kaufman, Longview, Pottsboro, Rusk and Seguin to build greenspaces in their communities. This is a great way to teach communities about Texas water smart plants and techniques. It's also a great way to give back to the seniors within our communities. We are excited about the projects underway, and hope to work with more retirement communities in the future!

## TDA Hosts North American Marketing Group



TDA was excited to host the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAAMO) annual conference in San Antonio just last week. It was a great opportunity for the agency to show NAAMO members from across the country the importance of Texas agriculture. NAAMO members joined us for four days of Texas-sized fun, including tours of a local winery, brewery, olive grove and olive oil processing facility, as well as a tour of the San Antonio wholesale produce terminal and H-E-B facilities.

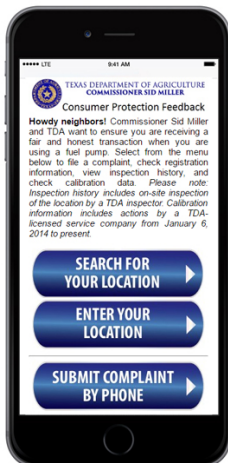
NAAMO's Marketer of the Year award at the conference. H-E-B was selected because of the company's strong commitment to Texas agriculture and the promotion of Texas-crafted products. NAAMO members learned all about the different ways H-E-B strives to support Texas businesses, from buying local produce whenever possible to spotlighting new products in their television and print ads. Many of the great Texas-made products sold in H-E-B bear the GO TEXAN mark, and TDA is proud to partner with them.

Additionally, NAAMO members were treated to a Texas favorite — lunch at the Salt Lick — and they got a taste of some of that famous Texas hospitality, as well as our celebrated barbecue and wine. Several wineries including GO TEXAN members Certenberg Vineyards, Driftwood Estate Winery and Fall Creek Vineyards were on hand for the day's festivities. As you can imagine, the main event was a family-style dinner with brisket, sausage, beef ribs, homemade bread, potato salad, coleslaw and beans topped off with blackberry and peach cobblers and vanilla ice cream.

NAAMO guests were overwhelmingly positive about their experience here in the Lone Star State, from how friendly Texans are to the variety within our ag industry across the state. TDA was pleased to host the conference and show everyone why Texas agriculture matters.

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## Mobile Fuel App Gets Refresh



TDA is working to protect you, even when you're on the go and at the gas pump. We recently updated our [mobile fuel app](#), which allows you to access fuel pump inspection reports and submit complaints. Every day, our inspectors are out in the field, doing their part to ensure fuel pumps are in compliance and that every penny you pump counts. Check out the mobile app to view inspection history, check calibration data and more!

