

Ag Matters



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



January 2017

Happy New Year, Friends!

It's hard to believe another year is already under our belts! 2016 was a great one for Texas agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). After a second year in office, I can say that my team and I are more equipped than ever to serve the people of this great state.

I'm optimistic that the new year will bring many triumphs for agriculture, especially with the new legislative session quickly approaching. We have a host of new priorities that will help protect Texas farmers and ranchers and our precious agriculture industry. I'm proud to be Texas agriculture's most vocal cheerleader, and you'll always find me campaigning for positive legislation to impact our industry. Agriculture is essential to our national security and our prosperity.

The men and women who work to provide our food and fiber are no strangers to adversity, and here at TDA, we do everything we can to support our farmers and ranchers. It is my hope that everyone will be a strong voice for agriculture and support those who feed us every single day.

No matter where I am, I'm always fighting for Texas agriculture, working to protect our farmers and ranchers, and spread the word that *Texas agriculture matters*. Much promise lies ahead in 2017, and I look forward to another great year for Texas agriculture.

Many wishes for a blessed and prosperous 2017!

Your servant,

Sid Miller

85th Legislative Session Starts Next Week



On January 10, the 85th Legislative Session will get underway at the State Capitol here in Austin. TDA will be a strong voice and advocate for Texas farmers and ranchers, and we're gearing up to protect Texas' agriculture industry and its stakeholders.

This session, TDA will focus on a variety of issues impacting our agriculture industry. Among our main priorities are continuing to expand international and domestic trade programs to help promote Texas agricultural products; ensuring the integrity of

our state metrology lab through remedial construction; replacing outdated information technology systems; creating a centralized accounting and payroll/personnel system; and addressing budgetary concerns for the agency. We're working on these issues with one goal in mind — improving our services for the taxpayers of Texas and the agriculture industry as a whole.

Texas agriculture is the glue that holds our economy and heritage together. Here at TDA, we will continue to strive for excellence, and with help of our legislators, our agency will continue to successfully support the farmers and ranchers of Texas.

ICYMI: Commissioner Miller Stops by Weslaco Citrus Facility, December GROW Award Winner Announced, Tamaulipas Secretary of Rural Development Visits TDA

Commissioner Miller recently visited the Texas A&M University - Kingsville Citrus Center in Weslaco, where he toured the facility and its laboratories. During the visit, Commissioner Miller also received updates on citrus canker and citrus greening — two important issues impacting Texas' citrus industry.

Emily Reiley, a senior from Marion High School, was selected as the winner of the Texas Department of Agriculture's monthly GROW award in December. Emily is a leader inside and outside the classroom. She is also a member of the FFA, National Honor Society, 4-H, Photography Club and Spanish Club. Her academic record shines, as she has earned one of the top spots in her graduating class. [Read](#) more about Emily's selection and find out how to nominate a deserving student in your area.



In early December, TDA was pleased to welcome our counterpart from the neighboring Mexican border state of Tamaulipas, Secretary of Rural Development Gonzalo Alemán Migliolo, to Austin. Secretary Migliolo came to Texas following his nomination to the post by the newly-elected Governor of Tamaulipas Francisco Garcia Cabeza de Vaca. Many ag-related issues were discussed with Secretary Migliolo, including invasive pest eradication, citrus greening and citrus canker spread, and new inspection points along the Texas-Mexico border. The group also discussed a USDA inspection point located closer to central Mexico that would catch suspect produce shipments and reject them before they traveled closer to the international border. [Read](#) more about the visit.



Fresh Fruits on The Menu in 2017

This month, school lunchrooms across Texas are serving delicious oranges and grapefruits supplied by the Department of Defense's (DoD) Farm to School program. TDA partners with DoD to make seasonal Texas foods available to teach children about the benefits of eating healthy local foods. The program also supports TDA's Farm Fresh Initiative, which connects young Texans with Texas agricultural products. For the entire 2016-2017 school year, Texas schools have ordered more than 1.8 million pounds of Texas citrus worth almost \$1.2 million.

Citrus is not the only fresh produce growing in Texas during the winter months. You can find out what is growing in Texas during any month using TDA's [seasonality wheel](#). All you have to do is [spin](#) the wheel to find the peak harvest times for various Texas products. Throughout the school year and across several growing seasons, DoD's Farm to School program guarantees that schools get Texas-grown watermelon, apples and citrus. That is important for Texas communities when you consider that for every \$1 spent on local food, \$2.16 of economic activity is generated.

DoD's Farm to School program is part of the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program that supplies schools with fresh produce grown in the United States. It's an important program that helps children in Texas and beyond enjoy healthy fresh fruits and vegetables.

New Year, New You: Tips For a Healthy 2017

It's a brand new year, and we are excited about what 2017 has in store for us here at TDA! As you know, Commissioner Miller and our Food and Nutrition team are advocates of the *3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right*. Many of us look to the New Year as a time for a fresh start. Here are a few tips to help you kick off the new year on the right foot!

Eat Some Beef

Our friends at the [Texas Beef Council](#) note that people who eat a higher-protein diet feel more satisfied, and this may help prevent overeating. Staying full on protein is a great way to give your body the nutrients and food it needs without depriving yourself. As the No. 1 cattle-producing state, there's plenty of Texas beef to go around.

Spice Up Your Salad

Many people look towards salad is a healthy choice for many of their meals. Don't want to get bored with making the same salad all the time? Try [this](#) GO TEXAN-approved salad recipe and switch it up a bit!

Get Moving

Organizations like the American Heart Association recommend getting in approximately 10,000 steps every day. This can be challenging, especially in an office environment. One way to get those steps in? Find a coworker and partner up! Take your breaks together and go for a walk. The [American Heart Association](#) says that getting into a routine of regular walking can help boost your energy and lower blood pressure.

These are just a few tips and tidbits to help you start 2017 on the right foot.

Want to Stay Connected With TDA?

TDA works hard to produce a variety of publications to keep you informed about our programs like GO TEXAN and agency activities that impact the ag industry in Texas. We also produce daily market news so you have the latest trends and market figures to make smart decisions. Want to be in the know? Simply [subscribe](#) to TDA publications today!

