



Subscribe



May 2017

### Texas Pride Shines Strong

One thing that stands out to me about the agricultural community and the community amongst Texans themselves is the generosity of our people. It's coming together and pitching in whenever you can, and it's being kind when others need it the most. Texans are not strangers to adversity. From the wildfires that ravaged through the Panhandle in March to the destructive tornadoes that went through Northeast Texas just this past weekend, Mother Nature hasn't always been kind to us.

That's why last week, as I toured the wildfire damage in the Panhandle, my pride in being a Texan grew even stronger. I witnessed firsthand a community that has come together amid devastating loss to put their lives back together. I was also pleased to spread the word about the Texas Department of Agriculture's State of Texas Agriculture Relief (STAR) Fund. The STAR Fund is geared towards helping farmers and ranchers rebuild after natural disasters.



As these disasters continue to impact Texas farmers and ranchers, I ask you to consider donating to the STAR Fund. This money goes directly back into the agriculture community after a natural disaster has been declared. You can make your donation to help those in need on our [website](#), and we'll get every dollar back to our farmers and ranchers so they can get back to doing what only they can do — growing and raising the food and fiber we all depend on.

Your servant,

Sid Miller

## STAR Fund Now Accepting Applications

Are you a farmer or rancher impacted by the wildfires in the Panhandle? We have funds to help you rebuild after this disaster. The STAR Fund can help you rebuild fences, restore operations and pay for other ag-related disaster relief. If a producer lives in a county where a disaster declaration has been issued by the governor, you have 60 days from the date of the governor's proclamation to turn in an application.

This year, private donors have given more than \$100,000 to the STAR Fund, and it's waiting to help those in need. Commissioner Miller encourages farmers and ranchers to [apply](#) online today. Should you have questions, contact TDA's [Grants Office](#).

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## Feral Hog Update, Scimetrics Withdraws Registration for Kaput Feral Hog Bait

In late April, Scimetrics Inc., the manufacturer of Kaput pest management products, requested to withdraw their state registration for a feral hog toxicant. Below is a snippet of Commissioner Miller's response to their request.

"As a privately-owned company, Scimetrics is wholly within its right to ask for their product registration to be withdrawn, effectively prohibiting its use in the state of Texas. While this request is unfortunate, the Texas Department of Agriculture respects their position and will close the registration. However, the debate over feral hog bait has always been over issues larger than just one product. As Texas Agriculture Commissioner, I am disappointed that landowners, farmers and ranchers will lose this tool to fight back against the growing economic threat of feral hogs. This is just another kick in the teeth for rural Texas."

Click [here](#) to read Commissioner Miller's full statement.

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## Enter Today: 2017-2018 Statewide Student Art Contest

The clock is ticking for Texas students to submit their entries for TDA's second annual statewide *You Art What You Eat* student art contest. The deadline is 5 p.m. on Monday, May 15, to get your entry in. Last year, the four winning students enjoyed seeing their artwork used in statewide campaigns promoting good nutrition in schools, as well as on display at the State Capitol. Commissioner Miller personally presented all the winners with their awards and commemorative framed prints of their artwork.

Any young artist in kindergarten through 12th grade at a Texas school can submit their artwork illustrating TDA's themes for National School Lunch Week or National School Breakfast Week in the 2017-2018 school year. This year's themes are "Rock the Day with a Healthy School Lunch" and "Dive into a Healthy Breakfast." Winners will be selected for the elementary school division and for the combined middle and high school division.

To find out how young Texans you know can use their artistic skills to promote healthy lifestyles in the Lone Star State, click [here](#).

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## Urban School Grant Program Deadline Approaching

TDA is looking forward to another great round of Urban Schools Agricultural Grant projects. The mission of this grant program is to improve urban students' understanding and appreciation of agriculture. This program provides funding for hands-on projects to teach urban children about the role that agriculture plays in their daily lives. Teachers utilize these projects to enhance science, math and writing programs at their schools. Many projects even extend beyond the classroom to incorporate community involvement with students' families, agricultural professionals and/or agricultural associations.

To date, more than 72 Texas elementary and middle schools have participated in this innovative grant program. Project funds must be used to enhance students' understanding of agriculture and cannot be used for campus beautification.

This is an exciting opportunity for school districts to expand their educational outreach or build upon the success of existing programs. TDA encourages school districts all across the state to develop a proposal and apply for this exciting program. The deadline to submit applications is **Thursday, May 25**.

Click [here](#) to learn more and download your application.

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## GROW Award Winners Finishing Out The School Year Strong

TDA is proud to honor outstanding middle and high school students for their academic and extracurricular achievement throughout the school year with the GROW award, which Gives Recognition for Outstanding Work. Just last month, TDA and Commissioner Miller were pleased to recognize Caitlin Edsall, a senior from Red Oak High School in Red Oak, Texas, as the winner of April's GROW award.



Caitlin is a shining star in the classroom, maintaining a high GPA and a spot in the top ten of her graduating class. She is a member of the FFA, Student Council and National Honor Society. Her teachers note that her impeccable time management skills help her balance academics and extracurricular activities so well. Read more about Caitlin's selection as a GROW award winner [here](#).

TDA will announce our final GROW award winner of the year on May 15.

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## Brahman Bulls: From Texas to Thailand

On Wednesday, April 12, TDA oversaw the shipment of four Brahman bulls from Texas to Thailand — one of the first air shipments of live cattle to take off from Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport in more than 20 years. The Brahman bulls, which were bred and raised on ranches outside of Houston, will be used for breeding stock in the Asian market.

All cattle leaving the country must be inspected at TDA holding facilities called export pens. Once the livestock are inspected and all export requirements are met — including a mandatory rest period — the cattle are loaded for transport to destinations all over the world by air and sea from Houston.

We'll give you a firsthand look at the journey these Brahman bulls took as they prepared to board their flight to Thailand in the latest edition of TDA's *Texas Agriculture Matters* video series, which is set to debut soon on [TDA's Facebook page](#). In the video, you'll see our team's visit to [J.D. Hudgins, Inc.](#) in Hungerford, Texas, where we talked with one of the owners about their longstanding family history with the Brahman breed and what it takes to export these animals to other countries.



TDA takes great pride in helping Texas livestock producers find international buyers and assist in cultivating those relationships. Be sure to check out the video later this week!

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## Social is The Way to be

Are you following along? TDA and our GO TEXAN program want to invite you along for the ride, so hop on over to Facebook and like us today. We're sharing the latest #MarketMonday posts and spotlighting the best of Texas through our GO TEXAN members on our [GO TEXAN Facebook page](#). From cattle shipments to the latest ag matters, you won't miss a beat if you follow along on [TDA's Facebook page](#). We're all on the journey of celebrating and promoting Texas agriculture together, so be sure to check us out on Facebook and follow along.

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## GO TEXAN Gearing up For The State Fair

TDA just wrapped up rodeo season, and now we're gearing up for the State Fair of Texas, which runs Sept. 29 through Oct. 22, 2017. We hope you'll plan to join us at the 2017 State Fair of Texas in the GO TEXAN Pavilion and the GO TEXAN General Store. The GO TEXAN General Store is a 3,000-square-foot retail space in the center of the Pavilion. It's the place to be for GO TEXAN members to promote and sell their Texas products, as well as visitors who are looking to buy the best in Texas.

For all of our GO TEXAN members out there, we are currently accepting applications to hold your spot in the GO TEXAN General Store. Our early bird registration runs now through May 31, and GO TEXAN members will get a 10 percent shelf discount! We hope you'll get your application in early, and just remember, general registration runs June 1 through July 31.



Not a GO TEXAN member and want to participate? Don't worry, it's not too late. Simply apply to be a GO TEXAN member. You can find a membership application [here](#), and mail it to us. Once your application is approved, you can apply to be in the GO TEXAN general store at the State Fair.

If you have any questions about becoming a GO TEXAN member or how to participate in the State Fair, call (877) 99-GOTEX or send us an [email](#).