



Ag Matters

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



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February 2018

It's Rodeo Time in Texas!

One of my favorite times of the year is here, friends ... it's rodeo time in Texas. Rodeo represents the true spirit of Texas, and it's the greatest show on dirt. As you know, I've been competing in rodeos all my life, so they definitely hold a spot near and dear to my heart. Rodeos are a great showcase of Texas agriculture, sportsmanship and livestock.

From the tie-down roping competitions to mutton bustin' to the carnival, there's so much to do at any given time at the rodeo. So, while they just wrapped up shows in Fort Worth and San Angelo, there's still plenty of time to get in on the rodeo action across the state. Mark your calendar, and whether you're in Austin, Houston, San Antonio or the Rio Grande Valley, be sure to head out to the rodeo near you.

- San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo: Feb. 8 – 25
- Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: Feb. 27 – March 18
- Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show: March 8 – 18
- Rodeo Austin: March 10 – 24

Come on out to the rodeo and enjoy some hoofs, hair, hides and horns. Plus, be sure to stop by our GO TEXAN booth at each of these rodeos — come say hi and learn about GO TEXAN and all the ways *Texas agriculture matters!* Long live cowboys, friends.

Your servant,

Sid Miller

Grant Opportunities Now Available for Nutrition Programs, Young Farmers

Expanding the 3E's Grant Program: Application Deadline: March 21

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is currently accepting applications for our Expanding the 3E's Grant Program, which helps schools increase awareness of the importance of good nutrition, especially for children, as well as encourages children's health and well-being through TDA's *3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right*. Public and charter school campuses across Texas can apply for these grants, which focus on creating, supplementing or expanding [Farm Fresh Friday](#) activities. Public and charter schools can apply for up to \$10,000 per campus and \$50,000 in cumulative funding per school district for nutrition education efforts for students. The deadline to submit an application is **March 21, 2018**. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Young Farmer Grant Program: Application Deadline: March 22

Are you currently creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas? Consider applying for the 2018 Young Farmer Grant (YFG) program. This initiative is administered by TDA under the direction of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA). The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance in the form of dollar-for-dollar matching grant funds to individuals between the age of 18 and 46 who are engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas.

Additional details, instructions and 2018 YFG Round 2 application materials can be found [here](#). Applications are due by the close of business (5 p.m. CT) on **March 22, 2018**.

Farm Fresh Challenge Aligns with Farm Fresh Initiative, Expands to Summer

This is a landmark year for TDA's Farm Fresh Challenge. Launched as the Local Products Challenge in 2013, the annual event has helped schools introduce millions of students to Texas products and agriculture. Participating schools earn TDA recognition for serving local foods, providing agriculture-based learning activities and sharing the Farm Fresh message through #FarmFreshFriday. This year's name change aligns the challenge with Commissioner Miller's Farm Fresh Initiative, which also includes Farm Fresh Fridays.

Right now schools are placing orders for Texas produce such as apples, red grapefruits and oranges that will be available for the 2018-2019 school year, including during the October 2018 Farm Fresh Challenge. TDA partners with the Department of Defense to implement the Farm to School Program that makes this delicious and healthy Texas produce available for schools in the National School Lunch Program.

Also this year, the Farm Fresh Challenge is expanding to include options for sponsors and sites to participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Community organizations and schools serving summer meals will now have access to TDA resources and recognition for offering local foods and agricultural education to children in SFSP. To learn more about the Farm Fresh Challenge and Farm Fresh Fridays, click [here](#).

Fact Sheet: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Rules

Do you have questions regarding Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Rules Affecting Texas Farmers, Ranchers, Related Ag Industries, and Ag Sport (Rodeo and Special Event) Recreational Transportation? We created a fact sheet, which is intended to provide very general information only regarding these rules. [Check](#) it out today.

Student Art Contest Winners, Start of New 2018-2019 Competition Announced

Commissioner Miller is pleased to congratulate Amy Hinojosa of Laredo and Gigi Cheng of Port Lavaca as winners in TDA's 2017-2018 *You Art What You Eat!* student art contest. Their artwork will be incorporated into posters and materials displayed at schools across Texas to celebrate School Breakfast Week, which takes place March 5 through 9, 2018. Out of 132 entries illustrating the theme *Dive into a Healthy Breakfast*, Amy earned the top honor in the elementary school category and Gigi won in the middle/high school contest. In addition to recognizing Amy and Gigi, Commissioner Miller also announced the start of the 2018-2019 art contest.

"I am proud to join Texas students in leading the way for school nutrition," Commissioner Miller said. "Only by working together as a team can we ensure young Texans and their communities make good nutrition and Texas agriculture part of their game plan for a healthy future."

TDA's art contest engages students in learning about good nutrition, and TDA is pleased to announce the themes for the 2018-2019 competition will be *Level up to a Healthy School Lunch* and *Level up to a Healthy School Breakfast*. Inspired by video games, these themes connect students' interests with the nutritious meals served by dedicated school nutrition professionals in Texas. All contest participants earn TDA recognition, and the winning entries are featured in schools statewide and in other TDA forums. **Entries will be accepted until 5 p.m. on April 20, 2018.**

TDA's *You Art What You Eat!* statewide student art contest is open to all Texas students attending a school participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program. Click [here](#) to learn more about submitting your entry 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*.

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