

# Ag Matters



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



May 2016

## Have You Been Farming For More Than 100 Years?

If your answer is yes, we want to hear from you! The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is in the final stages of collecting applications for our 2016 Family Land Heritage (FLH) registry. FLH pays tribute to families who have kept their land in continuous agricultural production for at least 100 years. It is truly an honor for TDA to recognize these Texas farmers and ranchers for their dedication to making our state's agriculture industry a powerhouse.

FLH is an event that I look forward to every year. If your family has been farming or ranching the same land continuously for more than 100 years, I encourage you to apply. As a lifelong rancher myself, I am proud to pay tribute to the men and women who nurture our land, and I encourage future generations to keep the legacy going.

We have more information and the FLH application on our website. Click [here](#) to find everything you need. Applications are due by **Tuesday, May 31**. I look forward to seeing you at the State Capitol this fall!

Your servant,

Sid Miller



## Small Business Forum This Thursday, Registration Still Open

This **Thursday, May 5**, join TDA at the State Capitol for the Capital For Texas Small Business Forum. This free event is a great opportunity to learn more about the Capital For Texas (C4T) small business loan program, as well as attend workshops on how to grow your business, receive small, minority business certifications, and become a GO TEXAN member. Additionally, the HUBZone certification program will take center stage during the afternoon and will be followed by a power networking session and raffle giveaway.

[Registration](#) is currently open, and we hope you'll join us for this exciting event.

To learn more about the event, [click here](#), and for more about the C4T program, [click here](#).



TDA is hosting the forum in conjunction with National Small Business Week, which takes place May 1-7. This year's theme is "Dream Big, Start Small."

If you attend the forum, use the #DreamSmallBizC4T hashtag to share your experience.

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## Final Vacancy on Plant Board to be Filled, Applications Due May 13

TDA is working to fill the final open seat on the Texas Seed and Plant Board. The six-member board prescribes rules and procedures by which seed and plant certification is conducted in Texas and serves as the mechanism for proposing new seed varieties for Texas growers.

We're looking for an individual who is licensed as a Texas foundation, registered or certified seed or plant producer who is not employed by a public institution to fill the final vacancy and complete the six-member board. This individual will be appointed by Commissioner Miller to serve a two-year term.

If you're interested in serving, click [here](#) to download an application. The deadline to submit an application is **May 13**. Should you have questions, contact [Mike Mann](#), TDA's director of agriculture commodity programs, at (512) 463-4753.

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## Farmers and Ranchers: The Original Conservationists

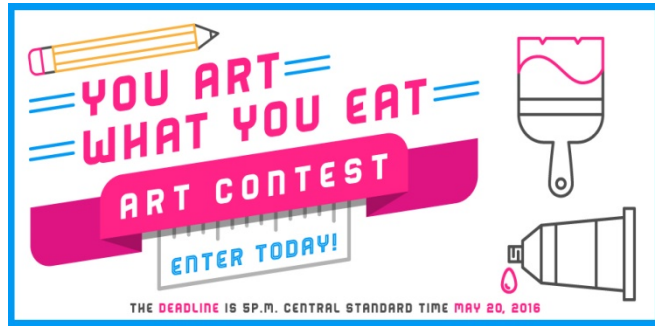


On April 22, we celebrated Earth Day. Every day, Texas farmers and ranchers are working hard to nurture the land and preserve it for generations to come. Check out the video above and learn about the many ways Texas farmers and ranchers work hard to keep our land fruitful.

[Hear](#) directly from the farmers and ranchers who produce our food, and remember friends, *Texas agriculture matters*.

## Contest Reminds Young Texans “You Art What You Eat”

TDA is hosting a statewide art contest, and we need the help of all the talented young Texans out there! The “You Art What You Eat” contest is working to promote fresh, local food and healthy eating in school cafeterias. Any student in kindergarten through grade 12 at a Texas school may submit an illustration for one or both of the themes: “Vote for a Winning Lunch” to celebrate National School Lunch Week and “Take the Breakfast Challenge” for School Breakfast Week.



There is so much artistic talent in the Lone Star State, and everyone at TDA is excited to see the artwork we receive from young Texans all across the state. The winning artwork will be featured in an exhibit at the State Capitol and on posters that will be displayed in Texas schools.

Entries must be received before 5 p.m. on **Friday, May 20**. Engaging young people to make smart choices about good nutrition and healthy lifestyles is a top priority at TDA, and this contest will help young artists picture a healthier future for themselves and our great state.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

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## ICYMI: Disaster Declarations Added; Jadeyn Arthur of Ralls High School Honored With 'GROW' Award; Organic Advisory Board Appointments Announced

Recent flooding has impacted many Texans, and the STAR Fund is available to assist farmers and ranchers in rebuilding fences, restoring operations and paying for other agricultural disaster relief. New disaster declarations have been issued, and those impacted should consider applying for the STAR Fund. In general, the deadline to apply for assistance through the STAR Fund is 60 business days after the governor issues a disaster declaration proclamation for the county. To see if your county is on the list, [click here](#).



Commissioner Miller honored Jadeyn Arthur, a junior from Ralls High School, as the winner of TDA's monthly GROW award in April. Jadeyn was chosen from hundreds of Texas students for demonstrating leadership in her school activities, as well as her commitment to community service. She has a background in agriculture and was raised on her family's cotton farm. Her upbringing has given her a unique awareness of agriculture's impact on our lives, which translates into everything she does. She's active in FFA and the National Honor Society. She plays softball and is a Texas State 4-H Equine Ambassador.

Click [here](#) to read more about Jadeyn's

accomplishments and why she was chosen for GROW.

In early April, Commissioner Miller announced new appointments to the Texas Organic Agricultural Industry Advisory Board. Created during the 80th Legislative Session by House Bill 2345, the board assists TDA in assessing the state of the organic agriculture industry and develops recommendations for Commissioner Miller to promote and expand the industry. Additionally, board members recommend statewide organic agriculture product education and awareness campaigns. Find out who was appointed and learn more about the advisory board [here](#).

## Coordinated Efforts Working to Eradicate Feral Hogs

TDA is spearheading the 2016 [Coordinated Hog Out Management Program](#) (CHOMP) to help decrease the feral hog population in Texas. The Lone Star State is home to nearly 2.6 million feral hogs — the largest in the nation. Their numbers are continuing to increase because of their high reproductive potential and lack of natural predators. That's why programs like CHOMP are so important.

CHOMP is a concentrated and coordinated effort with local county partners across Texas to decrease the feral hog population and mitigate the millions of dollars in damage they cause. Counties that participate in CHOMP will be scored on the number of feral hogs taken during the one-month challenge, which runs May 1-31, 2016. Additional points will be awarded based on the educational initiatives implemented to teach residents about abatement technologies to help further manage local feral hog populations. Through CHOMP, winning counties will receive assistance to continue abatement activities in their area.

Feral hogs wreak havoc on property, livestock, crops and pastures across the state, and frustrate landowners because of their destructive nature. Landowners have reported extensive damage to crops, fences, roads, ponds and fields, as well as feed losses.

Furthermore, feral hogs have a negative impact on the state's economy and the safety and health of the public. That's why the Texas Legislature has appropriated funds to TDA since 2006 to implement abatement technologies.

Through CHOMP, TDA is excited to build partnerships between the state and local partners to provide flexibility in implementing feral hog abatement efforts that work across the vast and varied geography that makes up our state. In addition, the value of TDA's partnership with agencies such as Tarleton State University, Texas A&M AgriLife Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife under the [Feral Hog Abatement Grant Program](#) will assist in the development of long-term solutions through research and education.

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## Make Gulf Shrimp The Star of Your Summer Gatherings



Summer is around the corner, and if you're looking to impress your friends at your next party, reach for wild-caught Gulf shrimp the next time you're at the grocery store. Texas Gulf shrimp are versatile and offer up a variety of quick, healthy and flavorful options for any gathering. Chef Ross Burtwell of [Cabernet Grill](#) has shared a great recipe, [Spicy Texas Shrimp Boil with Garlic Citrus Butter and Pickled Okra](#), with us to help you enjoy Gulf shrimp all summer long!

