



Subscribe



February 2017

It's Rodeo Time in Texas!

One of my favorite times of the year is upon us, 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, and they offer plenty of family fun.

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 the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo last week, 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, San Angelo, Houston, San Antonio or the Rio Grande Valley, be sure to head out to the rodeo near you.

- San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo: February 3-19
- San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo: February 9-26
- Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: March 7-26
- Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show: March 8-19
- Rodeo Austin: March 11-25

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

World-Class Athletes Help TDA Promote GO TEXAN

This weekend was full of fun surrounding the big game and the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) GO TEXAN program. Commissioner Miller was pleased to launch a new outreach effort this past weekend. It's designed to turn athletic fame into marketing gold for Texas-based products and companies.

TDA's GO TEXAN Ambassador program will utilize sports heroes to help tout GO TEXAN — TDA's statewide marketing program — and recruit new members. GO TEXAN, with its nationally-recognized signature logo in the shape of Texas, promotes the products, culture and communities that call Texas home.



So far, former Dallas Cowboy and two-time Super Bowl Champion Billy Davis, Dallas Cowboy and three-time Super Bowl Champion Kevin Smith, two-time Super Bowl Champion Ray Crockett and legacy football star Anthony Dorsett have joined us as GO TEXAN Ambassadors.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

Application Deadline Approaching For School Nutrition Grants

TDA is currently accepting applications for our Expanding the 3E's Grant Program, which help schools increase awareness of the importance of good nutrition, especially for children, and to encourage children's health and well-being through TDA's *3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right*. Public school campuses across Texas can apply for these grants, which are 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 **Feb. 28, 2017**. Click [here](#) to learn more.

TDA Conference Emphasizes Excellence and Agriculture in Summer Food Service Program

No child should go hungry because the school lunchroom is closed for summer, and this month's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Conference in Austin will help TDA partners ensure this doesn't happen. Now in its fourth year, TDA's SFSP Conference brings together nonprofit sponsors and Texas school districts for the inspiration and education they can use to successfully serve summer meals to children in need.

Making Texas agriculture part of SFSP through Farm to Summer initiatives has been a priority for Commissioner Miller. This year's conference will include a workshop aimed at increasing the agricultural component of SFSP through gardening, including raising community awareness of local foods used in SFSP. TDA also plans to have a new Farm to Summer resource available at the conference. In addition to Farm to Summer, TDA will offer training to help sponsors meet federal regulations, operate efficiently and achieve success in many other program areas. There will be a workshop to help summer sites offer meals that are appealing and nutritious for children.

The conference and training will be held Feb. 15-17. You can learn more about [Farm to Summer](#) and the [SFSP Conference](#) on SquareMeals.org.

ICYMI: Texas-Israeli Trip Being Planned, Grain Referendum Results Announced and GROW Winners Honored

Commissioner Miller is pleased to announce that he has been invited to Israel to meet with regional and national officials, including Uri Ariel, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, to discuss vital agricultural issues, including trade and jobs. The trip will take place in March, and the itinerary is still

being finalized. Commissioner Miller's visit kicks off a new TDA trade initiative to strengthen ties between the state of Texas and the Jewish state of Israel through trade and marketing opportunities. As a part of that initiative, we are already working on discussions with Israeli companies to invest in production, distribution and marketing centers in Texas. Click [here](#) to read the full announcement.



Commissioner Miller honored Sarita Short, a senior from Panther Creek Consolidated Independent School District (Panther CISD) in Valera, Texas, as the winner of the Texas Department of Agriculture's monthly GROW award in January. Sarita is president of her school's FFA chapter, an A-student, member of the basketball and track teams, and a mentor to her fellow students. [Read](#) more about Sarita's accomplishments and why she was chosen for GROW.

In early January, TDA announced Texas grain producers voted against the establishment of a producer assessment to self-insure against financial risks associated with selling or storing grain. TDA certified all the ballots, and the final results were 148 in favor of establishing the fund and 665 against. [Read](#) the full announcement.

Additionally, TDA regional representative Jami McCool visited Marion High School to present our December 2016 GROW award winner, Emily Reiley, a senior from Marion High School in Marion, Texas, with her official certificate signed by Commissioner Miller. Click [here](#) to read more about Emily's award.



TDA Celebrated 10-Year Anniversary of Home-Delivered Meal Program

Just last month, TDA was proud to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of our Texans Feeding Texans: Home-Delivered Meal Grant Program. The celebration kicked off with the announcement that TDA is awarding approximately \$8.7 million to 181 organizations across Texas that will serve meals to homebound elderly and disabled Texans this year.



Commissioner Miller visited Dallas to mark the occasion with the Visiting Nurses Association of Texas (VNA) and deliver meals to Dallas residents who directly benefit from the grant funding. This year, VNA received \$1.1 million in funding from TDA for their home-delivered meal program. Grants like the one received by VNA help home-delivered meal providers supplement and extend their programs in order to feed more Texans.

TDA has awarded more than \$90 million in the past 10 years in the form of home-delivered meal grants, matched by around \$25 million from counties across Texas. TDA makes approximately 180 awards every year that serve more than 130 Texas counties.

[Read](#) the full announcement about this year's grant awards, and click [here](#) to view photos from Commissioner Miller's trip to Dallas.

Big Game Makes Big Plays as a GO TEXAN Member

Many of us spent this past Sunday gathered around the TV set watching football. Ever wonder where and how footballs are made? Big Game USA in Dallas is the largest American-owned football factory on the planet, and they make footballs used in high school and college programs all across the country. Big Game USA is also a proud GO TEXAN member.

Want to learn more about how a football is made and what sets Big Game USA apart from the rest? Click [here](#) to check out their feature in our *Go Local. GO TEXAN.* e-zine.

Be sure you [sign up](#) for this monthly GO TEXAN publication and never miss a story.

GO LOCAL. GO TEXAN.
TEXAS FOOD, WINE, RESTAURANTS, RECIPES, GARDENING, STYLE & MORE
JANUARY 2017 EDITION



GO TEXAN.



BIG GAME USA:
THE BEST FOOTBALLS IN TEXAS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Commissioner Miller Encourages Organizations to Apply For 2017 Summer Nutrition Program

Even though summer seems far away, now is the time for organizations that partner with TDA to serve meals in the summer to apply for this year's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This program and the organizations that partner with TDA help feed children who do not have access to nutritious meals when schools close for summer.

More than 12 percent of Texas households are considered food insecure, meaning every member of the household does not have consistent access to good nutrition. That's why SFSP and our Seamless Summer Option (SSO) are great to help community organizations, schools and more serve nutritious meals in the summer. In partnership with USDA, TDA administers these two federally funded programs to help address childhood hunger during the summer vacation.

The application deadline for new sponsors and those requiring more thorough review is **April 15, 2017**. All other returning sponsors must apply by **May 1, 2017**. The deadline for all SSO applications is **May 31, 2017**.

For more information about TDA's Summer Nutrition Programs, click [here](#).