

Texas Department of Agriculture

Mid-Year Accomplishments



2025

LEADING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In just half a year, Commissioner Sid Miller and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) have delivered real results for farmers, ranchers, and rural Texans. Here are some of the biggest victories in 2025 so far.

- ★ Commissioner Miller and TDA delivered \$280 million in water-related aid to South Texas producers. Partnering with USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, he administered grants to offset Mexico's failure to meet 1944 Water Treaty water delivery obligations.
- ★ Commissioner Miller deployed the testing of TDA Swormlure to protect Texas livestock. Partnering with the USDA, he has directed the agency to launch the research of innovative bait, inoculation, and treatment solutions to combat the resurgence of New World Screwworm.
- ★ Commissioner Miller mobilized TDA disaster relief efforts after Central Texas flooding, activating the AgriStress Helpline, STAR Fund, and Hay & Feed Hotline to support affected farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.
- ★ Miller and TDA worked to protect Texas agriculture from unsolicited seed packages, being the first state to announce the return of the packages. Under Miller's direction, TDA coordinated with federal partners to collect and inspect mystery seeds delivered to Texas from China, protecting against possible invasive species or biosecurity threats.
- ★ Commissioner Sid Miller spearheaded the charge that led to USDA's year-long postponement of the Horse Protection Act, a major victory in protecting America's equine industry from unnecessary federal burdens.



- ★ Commissioner Miller warned Texans to remain vigilant of a dangerous invasive crop fungus, *Fusarium graminearum*, which threatens wheat and corn crops and food safety. The fungus was smuggled illegally from China and could be exploited as a bioweapon.
- ★ Sid Miller also commended the decisions at both the state and national levels to ban the purchase of rural lands by foreign adversaries—a victory he had championed for years.
- ★ In 2025, Commissioner Miller established the inaugural Texas Agriculture Trade Day. He proclaimed March 19 as an annual statewide celebration of fair trade's role in bolstering Texas's rural economy and agricultural strength.
- ★ Sid Miller established regular monthly visits at the agency by a Chaplain for those who would conveniently reinforce or explore their faith.
- ★ Commissioner celebrated the long, hard-fought legal victory over delisting of the Lesser Prairie Chicken on the Endangered Species Act and the rollback of the federal expansion of the Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge, preserving prime agricultural lands for production.

“ Sid Miller has been my partner on the New World screwworm for six months, and no one knows more or has fought more mightily for our cattle ranchers, especially in Texas, but around the country. ”

- USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins



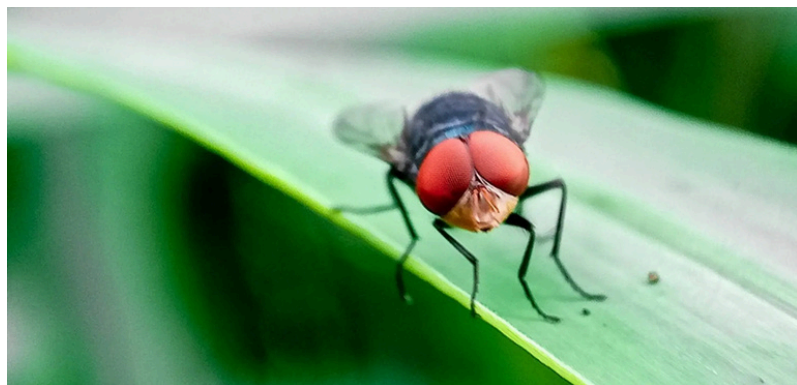
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

SCREWWORM RESPONSE

The reemergence of the New World screwworm is one of the most significant threats Texas livestock producers have faced in decades. This parasite spreads rapidly through wounds in livestock and wildlife, causing devastating losses if left unchecked. The new sterile fly production facility will serve as a powerful long-term safeguard, but time is of the essence. To protect producers today and prevent a nationwide outbreak, the Texas Department of Agriculture is moving swiftly to support fast-acting, innovative control methods that complement the proven Sterile Insect Technique and help ensure the permanent eradication of this devastating pest.

TDA Swormlure

Developed by Commissioner Sid Miller's Biosecurity team, TDA Swormlure is a cutting-edge attractant built with a proprietary polymer and chemical blend. Early field tests in Panama, conducted by USDA-APHIS, have shown it outperforming existing tools. Unlike traditional surveillance methods, Swormlure can be rapidly scaled across Texas, representing an innovative and proactive step.



Pesticide Bait

Pesticide baits remain the most immediate line of defense. Historically, Dichlorvos was used to eradicate flies, killing up to 90% of flies on contact. When paired with monitoring systems such as TDA Swormlure, they buy ranchers and veterinarians valuable time to stop outbreaks before they spread. Dichlorvos is proven to be highly effective, but alternatives are available for flexibility.

Inoculation

A platform vaccine is under rapid development (5–8 months) to build protection directly into livestock. This non-mRNA technology alters proteins in the animal's blood, preventing screwworm eggs from developing into larvae. Already successful in trials for ticks, it shows strong promise against screwworm. Once deployed, ranchers will have a powerful built-in shield to protect their herds before infection occurs.



Ivermectin

Unlike during past outbreaks, ivermectin is now available as both an injection and a pour-on treatment, working as both a prevention and a cure for screwworm myiasis. TDA is pursuing approval for use as a feed additive, allowing broad herd coverage. This tool can also safeguard wildlife such as high-fence deer, closing off pathways for the pest to spread beyond livestock.



FOOD & NUTRITION

Guided by Commissioner Sid Miller, the Food and Nutrition Division continues its nation-leading mission: making sure cafeterias and adult care facilities serve safe, healthy meals rooted in the hard work of Texas farmers and ranchers.

- 🥕 Commissioner Miller and TDA hosted MegaCon 2025, featuring over 700 partners and 40+ training sessions to strengthen school nutrition programs statewide.
- 🥕 Commissioner Miller and TDA partnered with Texas minor league baseball teams to honor school nutrition staff on School Lunch Hero Day.
- 🥕 TDA expanded Pear-fection recognition by 235% for excellence in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- 🥕 TDA developed an in-house web-based system to modernize federal nutrition program administration, projected to save over \$500,000 annually.



- 🥕 TDA recognized 132 school districts for completing the Farm Fresh Challenge, ensuring support for the farm to school initiative.
- 🥕 TDA launched a training program with Texas A&M AgriLife to help producers grow their school and childcare markets.
- 🥕 TDA added 60 new producers to the Farm Fresh Network and introduced an improved interactive map.



- 🥕 TDA issued 145,250 vouchers for the Texas Farmers Market Nutrition Programs to support families, seniors, and local farmers.
- 🥕 Commissioner Miller and TDA celebrated the 2nd Annual Texas Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Day and introduced a statewide contest in partnership with the Texas Association for School Nutrition.
- 🥕 Texas led the nation for the fourth consecutive year in the USDA's Turnip the Beet Awards, earning 57 of the 199 awards, or 29% of the national total.
- 🥕 84 high school students across 16 districts joined TDA's Health Ambassadors for a Ready Texas (HART) initiative.
- 🥕 TDA trained 49 high school MyPlate Ambassadors through Texas A&M AgriLife, who led education and taste-testing events.
- 🥕 TDA promoted National School Breakfast Week with the new "Clue into School Breakfast" campaign.
- 🥕 TDA further expanded its leadership role nationally with staff serving on boards of the American Commodity Distribution Association and the School Nutrition Association.
- 🥕 TDA expanded Summer Meal access in rural areas through the Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Feeding Option.



State Office of Rural Health

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Under Commissioner Miller, the State Office of Rural Health continues its vital mission of supporting rural healthcare through grants, technical assistance, and partnerships that strengthen clinics and hospitals across Texas.

WORK THE LAND. REST THE MIND.

TEXAS PEACE OF MIND

Have you experienced problems like rising costs, market fluctuations, family conflicts, or extreme weather? Are you stressed or feeling defeated?

**EVEN THE
TOUGHEST PEOPLE
NEED HELP SOMETIMES**

**AgriStress
HELPLINE**
for Texas

833.897.2474
call or text



scan and save the number



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

START WITH A SIMPLE CALL

In 2022, concerned about the increasingly high rates of suicide among farmers, Commissioner Miller established the AgriStress Helpline, a 24/7 support service operated by agriculture-aware personnel that offers support to struggling individuals. TDA continues to take an active role in promoting rural mental health awareness.

- 🇹🇽 The AgriStress helpline has successfully intervened in over **330** cases.
- 🇹🇽 Thanks to advocacy efforts, the program was successfully funded by the Texas legislature for two more years, 2025-2027.
- 🇹🇽 TDA crafted targeted outreach to the commercial fishing and forestry sectors.
- 🇹🇽 **250** mental health professionals are certified in FarmResponse, a curriculum designed to increase the knowledge of agricultural stressors among mental health professionals.
- 🇹🇽 Commissioner Miller recently offered the helpline to all Texans, not just agriculture producers, impacted by the tragic flooding across central Texas.



- SORH awarded 114 Small Hospital Improvement grants for 25-26.
- SORH assisted five Critical Access Hospitals in participating in Charge Master Review analysis.
- SORH co-hosted with Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH) a Chief Financial Officer workshop for 65 participants.
- SORH provided regional trainings for the use of the TORCH Data Hub in all six SORH regions.
- TDA and SORH provided two quality improvement bootcamps to hospital quality directors.



- SORH directed 18 hospital quality improvement staff to complete our Quality Improvement Training Program, a year-long prep course to take an exam to become a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality.

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

From banning lab-grown meat to securing water infrastructure investments and industry-saving labeling laws, the 89th Legislative Session stands out as one of the most successful in the agency's history and for Texas agriculture in decades, thanks to several key victories championed by Commissioner Sid Miller and his government relations team.



Protecting Agriculture and Expanding Markets:

Legislators passed several key measures to strengthen Texas agricultural production and promote Texas products at home and abroad. **HB 43** modernizes the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority by increasing loan caps, expanding grant programs, and launching new initiatives to fight pests and disease. With \$100 million in funding, the bill represents a significant boost to producers seeking to expand or safeguard their operations.

The passage of **SB 1035** and **HB 4163** builds on last session's Right to Farm legislation by strengthening farmers' legal protections against local government overreach, while **SB 17** blocks hostile foreign entities from purchasing Texas farmland.

SB 823, which requires accurate labeling of imported versus domestic meat and shrimp, and **SB 261**, a two-year ban on lab-grown meat, are needed to protect Texas ranchers and consumer expectations.

Historic Water Infrastructure Investment:

Among the most impactful victories was **SB 7**, a transformative water infrastructure bill that directs the Texas Water Development Board to enhance oversight and financing for critical water projects. Coupled with **HJR 7**, which will dedicate \$1 billion annually to the Texas Water Fund if approved by voters this November, the state is prioritizing future water security.

Additionally, **SCR 13** calls on the federal government to ensure Mexico meets its treaty obligations regarding water resources, an issue vital to agriculture in southern Texas.



Strengthening TDA and Food Security:

The Texas Department of Agriculture received key funding and structural support through **SB 1** and **HB 500**:

- Enhanced pest and disease protection for livestock and crops
- Expanded food access programs, including school meals and food banks
- A new state seed lab to support healthy crops
- Upgrades for TDA vehicles and website systems
- Support for the GO TEXAN program to market Texas-grown products

These enhancements enable TDA to better serve the \$100 billion+ agriculture industry and meet the needs of Texans across the state, particularly in rural areas.

Texas landowners also saw support with SB 2601, which establishes a fund to compensate farmers and ranchers for agricultural damages caused by border-related crime. And in a call to federal action, **HCR 76** urges stronger protections against foreign shrimp imports that undercut Gulf Coast producers.

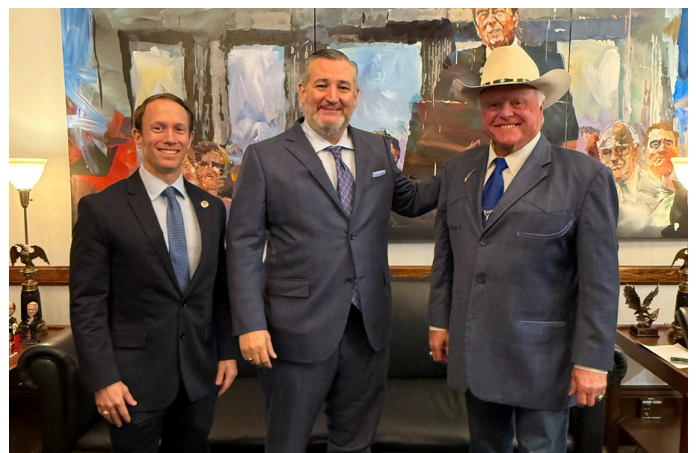


Investment in Rural Texas:

Several new bills aim to revitalize rural communities by providing better access to healthcare, workforce development, and internet services. **HB 18** expands rural hospital and telehealth services for children.

HB 3000 establishes a grant program for ambulance services in underserved areas, while **SB 2448** and **HB 2765** promote job creation, education, and investment in communities with a population of 200,000 residents or fewer.

Broadband access also got a boost. **SB 1405** enhances funding flexibility and reduces taxes on internet services to promote high-speed connectivity in rural areas.



MARKETING



Under Commissioner Sid Miller's leadership, GO TEXAN Marketing in 2025 elevated Texas agriculture and agribusiness through innovative campaigns and expanded partnerships. The program strengthened the GO TEXAN brand as the gold standard for promoting Texas-made products, driving growth, and supporting local economies.

- Commissioner Miller and TDA announced the proud sponsorship of the new Crossroads of Texas GO TEXAN Country Festival, already the largest single-day festival in Texas, and with the GO TEXAN sponsorship, promises to be bigger and better than ever.
- Commissioner Miller and GO TEXAN have seen their highest number of Champion Partners' enrollments in history. As of August 2025, GO TEXAN now has 18 Champion Sponsors, representing a significant increase for the program.
- GO TEXAN is now welcoming our first-ever GO TEXAN media partners into the program. Commissioner Miller welcomed CBS Texas and Texas State Networks as our first media partners, who will join us at the GO TEXAN Pavilion at the State Fair of Texas to broadcast from the Pavilion every day.
- The GO TEXAN program team is working hard alongside the agency's Information Technology team to finalize a revamped application program. Staff have worked hard to create new tiers, categories, and new mark designs to improve the GO TEXAN program and allow for more GO TEXAN partners to join.
- Commissioner Miller and the GO TEXAN team hosted its 3rd ever GO TEXAN Expo in June 2025 at the Total Home and Gift Show at Dallas Market Hall. We have four different sessions for partners to attend between meetings with new buyers at the market.
- GO TEXAN has a record number of GO TEXAN partners registered for booth space for our first-ever Crossroads of Texas GO TEXAN Country Festival. This event is expected to attract thousands of guests on October 25th this fall. Additionally, the Uncork Texas Wine program will host its first-ever wine garden at this event, featuring 15 wineries, with all proceeds benefiting the Star Fund.
- TDA is also introducing two new shows into GO TEXAN's lineup in the West Texas Region for GO TEXAN partners – Permian Basin Fair and Midland County Fair. Later this August, partners in the West Texas region will have the opportunity to sample and sell products in their own backyard through GO TEXAN.
- Commissioner Miller and TDA launched the Texas Gulf Seafood campaign, which has generated an estimated 57,576,013 million impressions to date for TDA, Commissioner Sid Miller, and our coastal stakeholders, with the strongest marketing pieces still on deck.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

Under the leadership of Commissioner Sid Miller, the Public Outreach Division spreads the Commissioner's message far and wide, setting the standard for state agency communications in Texas

- Marketing and Public Outreach releases have generated over 8,000 mentions this year, representing a 54% increase in media exposure compared to the same period last year. This number positions the Marketing and Public Outreach division at the TDA as one of the very top performers in state government.
- Marketing and Public Outreach generated millions of dollars' worth of airtime through extensive coverage on television and radio, bringing agricultural issues and TDA initiatives to households across Texas and beyond.
- Public Outreach successfully relaunched Shoot the Bull on Texas State Networks and continued production of the Sirius XM agriculture-focused radio segments, amplifying TDA's voice on both regional and national platforms.



- Public Outreach reinvented the agency television show, now called Texas our Texas, which will begin airing this fall. The division also began development of the Truly Significant Texans podcast and show, highlighting influential Texans and expanding TDA's storytelling efforts into new formats.
- Public Outreach consistently secured top-tier interviews, driving agency initiatives on several national networks and publications, including but not limited to Fox News, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, NewsNation, CNN, The Hill, NBC News, The Washington Post, and more.



- Public Outreach worked closely with both federal and state partners to coordinate communications on the reemergence of the New World Screwworm, ensuring accurate and unified messaging.
- Public Outreach assisted in planning and executing press conferences related to the historic 1944 Water Grant and New World Screwworm response efforts in the Rio Grande Valley.
- Public Outreach executed a strong outreach campaign for the 1944 Water Grant program across multiple channels, resulting in thousands of applications from Texas communities.
- Public Outreach launched a new weekly agency newsletter and revamped its monthly newsletter better to keep agency stakeholders, partners, and the public regularly informed of TDA initiatives, updates, and opportunities.



TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LIVESTOCK EXPORT FACILITIES



Livestock Export pens continue to benefit from the export of swine. The Brownsville facility has exported over **180,000** hogs to Mexico. In the first 6 months of the year, the facilities have exported **215,000** animals into Mexico and around the world. TDA facilities maintain the highest biosecurity standards and continue to ensure the safety of all facilities for the benefit of the animals and staff. We are improving security with new fencing, lighting, cameras, and secure parking garages for all vehicles and equipment.



TEXAS OFFICE OF PRODUCE SAFETY

The Texas Office of Produce Safety continues to be a leader in implementing the Produce Safety Rule. Produce Safety Outreach Specialists are conducting inspections of watermelon and cantaloupe in West Texas and the Panhandle. Outreach is the foundation of the program, and in year four of our cooperative agreement, TOPS has inspected **56** farms and provided outreach to **671** farms.

GRANT PROGRAMS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- ➔ TDA administered the **\$280** million Texas 1944 Water Treaty Assistance Grant program from conception to near completion in a six-month period, providing assistance to nearly 1,800 applicants.
- ➔ TDA awarded **30** Young Farmer Grants.
- ➔ TDA awarded **30** Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grants.
- ➔ TDA assisted regional food banks with purchasing more than 107 million pounds of food under the Surplus Agricultural Grant Program.
- ➔ Distributed funds for the Home Delivered Meal Grant Program.
- ➔ Implemented a significant change in the application process to make the process easier and more streamlined for communities. At the same time, these changes also allow for TDA staff to provide more technical assistance, resulting in fewer disqualifications and compliance issues.
- ➔ Navigated through new federal requirements such as the Build America, Buy America (BABA) regulations that came with very little guidance from HUD.



CONSUMER PROTECTION & BIOSECURITY ENFORCEMENT

Under Commissioner Sid Miller's leadership, the Consumer Protection division safeguarded Texans by ensuring accuracy in weights and measures, fair pricing, and high standards for food quality. At the same time, the Biosecurity Enforcement division protected the state's agriculture and livestock industries through rigorous inspections and swift action against threats to animal and plant health.

- ◆ TDA conducted **22,296** device inspections to ensure accuracy and fairness in the marketplace.
- ◆ TDA conducted **1,587** price verification and package inspections completed to safeguard consumers.
- ◆ TDA executed **1,026** egg inspections performed to maintain high standards for quality and safety.
- ◆ At TDA's Metrology Lab, **13,165** artifacts have been calibrated to support precision in measurements across industries.



- ◆ At successful TDA pesticide waste collection events this year, the agency collected an approximate total of **254,619** pounds of pesticide waste that would have potentially harmed the environment if mishandled.
- ◆ TDA conducted **2,618** Agricultural Pesticide Inspections.
- ◆ TDA spearheaded the analysis of **2,657** samples of collected pesticide residue conducted.
- ◆ TDA conducted **994** structural pesticide inspections.

Seed:

- TDA collected over **1,200** mystery seed packages across the Lone Star State.
- TDA processed **2,932** seed samples for analysis.
- TDA developed an electronic seed inspection system for collecting regulatory seed samples.
- TDA created a Procedures and Guidelines Manual to allow Certified Seed Growers to print their own certified seed labels.

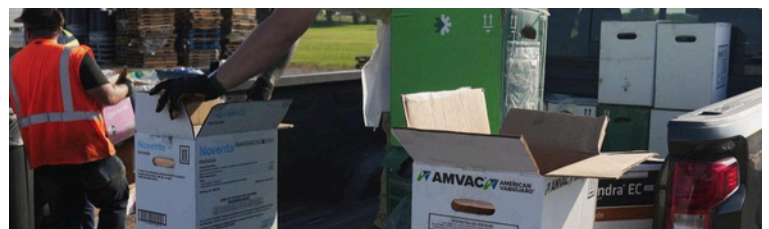
Organics:

- **61** organic compliance inspections conducted.
- Passed USDA audit to maintain accreditation under the National Organic Program.
- Began certifying organic importers under the Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule to ensure supply chain integrity.

Nursery Floral:

- Over **4,700** inspections were conducted at nursery and floral establishments.
- **1,839** quarantine inspections performed.

- ◆ TDA inspected **95,550** fruit fly traps to monitor for new pest arrivals and current infestations.
- ◆ TDA conducted **95** grain warehouse inspections at facilities across the state.
- ◆ TDA oversaw the reimbursement of over **\$71,000** from the Produce Recovery Fund for claims of non-payment, ensuring farmers are compensated for their crops.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

From cybersecurity to cutting-edge solutions, the Information Technology team powers TDA's mission and ensures staff statewide have the tools they need to serve Texans.



- ★ IT successfully migrated eApply and export pens from ePay to SnapPay, enabling the agency to continue receiving payments in this legacy application while the new application was being developed.
- ★ IT implemented simplified GO TEXAN registration and Renewals as requested by the Commissioner and Executive staff.
- ★ IT represented TDA at the Digital Government Summit. Secured a TDA table where Communications, Marketing, and F&N highlighted TDA outreach efforts.



- ★ Information Technology successfully migrated public BRIDGE from ePay to SnapPay, enabling the agency to continue receiving payments in this legacy application while the new application was being developed. This is a significant prerequisite step necessary for the new legacy system to go live.



- ★ IT successfully thwarted a sophisticated denial-of-service attack from Hackers at the beginning of Summer 2025. This malicious attempt was targeting our TDA website.
- ★ TDA hosted five Tech Talks and conducted vital Cybersecurity training agency-wide.
- ★ TDA modified the GO TEXAN third-party-hosted payment page, enabling the program to accept payments through this page that match their new tier structure.
- ★ TDA Information Technology completed the Food Service Management Company (FSMC) application phase 1 development, enabling school districts to create RFPs more easily as part of their vendor search process.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1(800) CALL-TDA



www.texasagriculture.gov