

TEXAS

Agriculture Matters

December 2025



Fighting New World Screwworm

TDA Welcomes Latin American Delegation

GO TEXAN'S Texas-Sized Growth

Commissioner Miller celebrates historic year for GO TEXAN

TDA Visits South Korea

Trade Delegation Put Texas Ruby Red Grapefruit on the Map



Fighting New World Screwworm: TDA Welcomes Latin American Delegation

In December, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller welcomed agricultural and animal health leaders from across Latin America to Austin for a two-day meeting aimed at strengthening international collaboration against the New World screwworm, a parasitic fly recently spreading northward from Central and southern Mexico.

The meeting brought together epidemiologists, livestock officials, and policy-makers to share surveillance data, response strategies, and prevention efforts. Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) staff coordinated the event with support from federal and producer organizations at the request of U.S. partners working to counter the growing pest threat.

The New World screwworm was officially eradicated from the United States in the 1960s, but recently has re-emerged across in Latin America, spreading as far north as just shy of the Texas border in Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The New World screwworm fly's larvae in particular pose a grave threat as they can infest open wounds on livestock and, in rare cases, humans causing severe injury or death if untreated.

Commissioner Miller emphasized the importance of a united regional response, highlighting that effective monitoring and swift action across borders are critical to protecting livestock industries and rural economies. Nations with delegates from Mexico, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua discussed key tactics, including enhanced surveillance along border regions, information sharing, and coordinated deployment of sterile insect techniques.

“Texas has been at the forefront of this fight, and coordination between our state and Latin America is essential to prevent this devastating pest from threatening our livestock, wildlife, and companion animals.”

— Commissioner Miller



The meeting reflects broader efforts underway in the region. Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are boosting surveillance, investing in sterile fly production, and supporting partnerships to halt the pest's advance before it reaches U.S. soil. Recent USDA initiatives include constructing domestic sterile fly production facilities.

The cooperative talks in Austin followed a series of legislative and executive actions at both state and federal levels to prepare for and prevent screwworm incursions. This includes state task forces and coordinated response teams aimed at early detection and rapid mitigation. Commissioner Miller's hope was also that these nations would hear about the trapping strategies researched by the TDA and deploy these tactics in their country.

"Everyone has a high duty of things to do day by day. Not only the farmers, but also the society, including the people who just have pets in their homes."

**Carlos Moreno, COPEG
General Director for Panama**

As the threat persists, Texas and its neighbors continue to refine science-based approaches to safeguard animal health, agricultural production, and cross-border trade in livestock. These talks marked a definitive stepping stone towards more collaboration between nations to push back this threat once and for all.

"We are doing as much as we possibly can to put an end to this pest. Believe me when I say that we, from Mexico and all other Central American countries, are doing our utmost best to bring this plague to an end."

**Nestor Guerrero, National Federation
of Cattle Producers in Mexico**



FOOD & NUTRITION

Texas Ag Producers Cultivate Farm-To-School Market with TDA Training

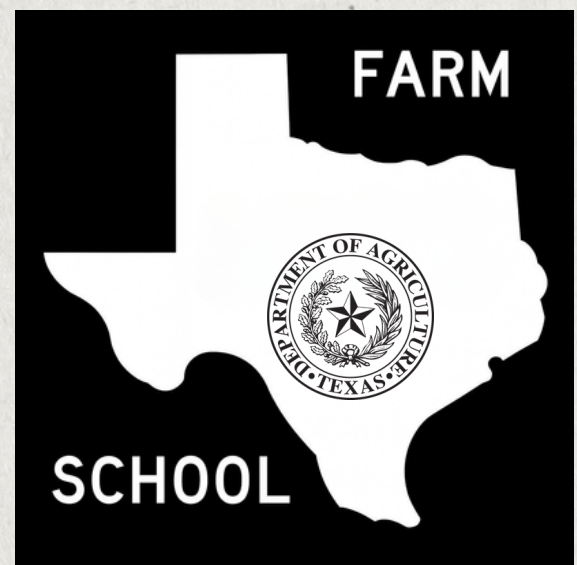
Texas is home to more than 400,000 farmers and ranchers, and many are now exploring farm-to-school opportunities through Commissioner Sid Miller's Farm Fresh Initiative. A new training effort funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) supports the Initiative's goal of demonstrating that selling to schools is both achievable and beneficial for producers. Through the FRESH TRAYS grant, agricultural producers will get training at regional workshops designed to help them confidently sell products to schools and bring more local food to students.

Developed collaboratively by the TDA Food and Nutrition Division and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, the FRESH TRAYS curriculum includes four modules: Getting to Know School Markets, Selling to School Markets, Choosing the Right Product for School Markets, and Growing for Schools. Each module includes guided discussions and real-world examples to help participants learn more about how school nutrition teams develop their menus and how they purchase the food they plan to serve.

The Region One Education Service Center in Edinburg hosted the first workshop in November. More than 20 producers—along with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents, distributors, and processors—spent the day exploring entry into Texas's \$2.7 billion school-nutrition market. The FRESH TRAYS interactive exercises helped producers assess their current readiness to sell to schools and use that information to shape their own school business plans. Agricultural producers received answers to key questions such as "Who else is selling in my area?" and "What products are they offering?"

The FRESH TRAYS grant also supports school nutrition teams. TDA Food and Nutrition is developing a parallel training curriculum for school nutrition leaders to help them strengthen their connections with Texas farmers and ranchers and purchase more fresh, local food. This training will show them how to select the right procurement method, how to develop solicitations, how to manage producer contracts, and more. It will launch in early 2026.

Strengthening skills and understanding on both sides of the market creates the conditions for long-term success. Producers gain the expertise needed to meet procurement guidelines and move their products from the field to the cafeteria, while school nutrition teams learn how to communicate their needs to producers and access more Farm Fresh ingredients. Together, FRESH TRAYS and Commissioner Miller's Farm Fresh Initiative position Texas to continue leading the way in connecting students with fresh, healthy, and locally grown food.



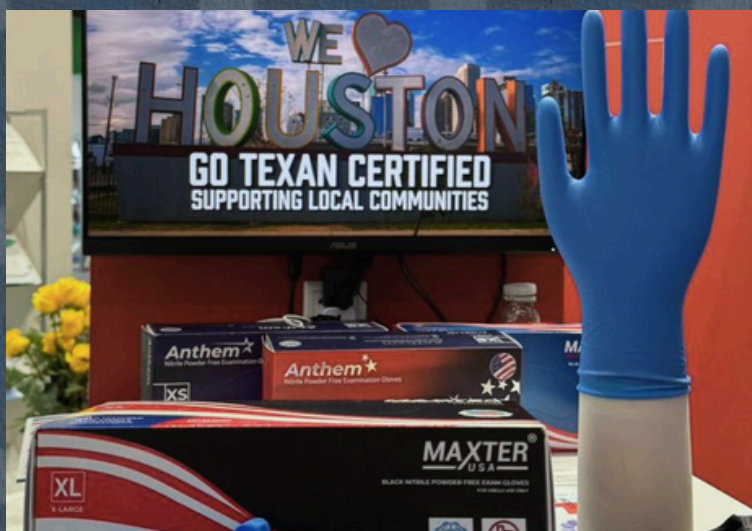
Maxter Healthcare Inc.

Maxter Healthcare Inc. was founded by Stanley Thai, who also started Supermax in Southeast Asia, with over 17 manufacturing plants. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global supply chain for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including facemasks, gowns, and gloves, was severely disrupted. Because PPE manufactured in the United States could not keep up with pandemic-driven demand, 99% of all PPE had to be imported from Asia, making it extremely difficult for hospitals to allocate products. In 2021, this inspired Thai to build a manufacturing plant in Houston, Texas, the first Maxter Healthcare manufacturing facility in the United States. According to Kevin Shutack, Vice President of Sales, there couldn't have been a better U.S. location than Houston because of its easy access to ports and highways and its pro-business climate.

Shutack believes what differentiates Maxter Healthcare from other PPE manufacturers is the company's strong foundation in quality, experience, and scalability. "Manufacturing gloves is an art and a science. There are teams of engineers, chemists, and medical professionals working together daily in one of the most advanced and fully automated facilities globally to meet the high quality and standards of the industry," said Kevin. Maxter gloves are nitrile-type disposable gloves, meaning they are 510(k) FDA-approved medical-grade products. They feature chemo and fentanyl-resistant qualities. Their thicker industrial-type gloves also serve markets beyond healthcare, including oil and gas, defense, retailers, government organizations, and even the beverage industry, where grilling chefs use them.

Maxter Healthcare Inc. joined the GO TEXAN program earlier this year. Through the Texas Department of Agriculture, they were introduced to an opportunity to participate in a medical trade show in Germany. By including the GO TEXAN seal on their products, Kevin hopes to broaden the company's horizons by representing the state of Texas—its capabilities and its talented, hardworking people. As the only GO TEXAN partner in the biomedical industry, he looks forward to greater synergy and alignment between Maxter Healthcare Inc. and the state to support other Texas entities better.

As for what's next for Maxter Healthcare, the company is entering a new phase of expansion for its manufacturing facility in Brazoria County. They aim to improve operations by incorporating renewable energy and recruiting more employees. Kevin enthusiastically said, "We're just starting, and the growth is vertical. With that, new opportunities will come, and we want to make the state of Texas proud. We want the nation to know that we have our hand in glove—pun intended—with the state to show we have the capabilities to meet the demand and needs of the people."



SOUTH KOREA



Wonderful
citrus™



Texas Redefines The Grapefruit Standard

Texas grapefruit is making a bold impression on the global stage. With its official entry into the South Korean market in June 2024, Texas agriculture opened the door to one of Asia's most discerning and competitive produce destinations—where flavor, consistency, and quality matter most. Early shipments quickly turned heads, and that momentum was reinforced when a Texas Department of Agriculture led trade delegation met directly with Korean retailers and importers to showcase what sets Texas grapefruit apart. From first tastings to face-to-face conversations, the message was clear: Texas citrus quality is a hit, and the 2025 season is poised for strong growth and lasting market expansion.

Initial commercial shipments of Texas grapefruit to South Korea began shortly after approval, with exporters sending limited early-season volumes to evaluate quality, gather buyer feedback, and refine logistics. "While initial volumes were moderate, interest has grown rapidly because Korean buyers recognized the difference in Texas quality. The 2025 season is positioned for significant expansion as demand increases, and more retailers commit to Texas programs," said Tony Noun, GO TEXAN Ambassador at the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The South Korean Market

South Korea is a competitive market dominated by imports from Israel and South Africa, with California supplying during other windows. However, there is a strong opportunity for Texas grapefruit to enter the Korean marketplace, especially during the next season. The Texas delegation found enthusiastic reception from retailers, importers, and consumers alike. Korea's top challenge with grapefruit has been inconsistent sweetness from traditional suppliers. Texas grapefruit, known for its vibrant color, juiciness, and reliably high brix, addressed that concern immediately during tasting sessions.



Rooted In Texas, Recognized Worldwide

The Texas trade delegation included Dante Galeazzi (Texas International Produce Association), Taka Fujishima (Wonderful Citrus), GO TEXAN Ambassador Tony Noun, and TDA Communications Officer Yoomee Kim. The team met with leading retailers such as E-Mart, Lotte Mart, Homeplus, Hyundai Department Store, and many more to highlight Texas grapefruit's quality and share the story behind how Texas' unique climate and growing practices produce a sweeter, more consistent fruit.

Proof Is In The Palate



Live tastings played a key role, and Texas grapefruit grabbed the spotlight. Delegates cut open fresh Texas grapefruit alongside locally sold fruit to compare color, flavor, and sweetness. Retailers consistently remarked on the striking difference, often requesting second samples. Fresh-squeezed juice demonstrations further showcased the purity and premium flavor that set Texas grapefruit apart.

The importance of consumer education, in-store sampling programs, and early-season promotions are essential to building lasting trust in this new category. Korean consumers value flavor and are willing to pay for a premium experience - an advantage for Texas growers.



Commissioner Sid Miller underscored the significance of the trade mission: "The South Korea trade mission was an important opportunity to strengthen Texas' agricultural presence in one of the world's most dynamic markets. Korea is a strategic partner, and we're committed to growing this relationship for years to come."

Texas agriculture thrives when it reaches beyond our borders. By fostering international relationships and sparking demand for Texas goods, TDA can unlock new trade pathways and untapped markets. South Korea's enthusiasm for Texas grapefruit makes it a standout emerging market with strong potential for future growth, and an example of how TDA is helping open doors for Texas agriculture around the world.

If you are a Texas business interested in attending outbound trade missions, [click here](#).





GO TEXAN.®

TEXAS-SIZED GROWTH!



Since 1999, the GO TEXAN program has been dedicated to showcasing products and businesses made right here in the Lone Star State. What started off as a few members has grown into thousands of people, products, and businesses from every corner of the state.

Over twenty-five years later, the program not only continues but thrives. At the end of 2024, there were approximately 1,771 GO TEXAN members. Now, almost a year later, that number has risen to 2,074, a 17% surge in total program participation. This tremendous growth speaks to the continued strength of Texas-made products, Texas-owned businesses, and the public's rising demand for goods that proudly bear the mark that matters.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

“These numbers tell the story of a program that’s promoting Texas like never before,” said Commissioner Sid Miller. “GO TEXAN is stronger than ever, and Texas businesses are stepping up in record numbers to join the movement. When you see that iconic GO TEXAN mark, you know you’re supporting local jobs, local families, and the Texas economy. I couldn’t be prouder of this growth or more excited for what’s ahead.”

The program has more than doubled its number of Champion partners, the top tier of sponsorship within GO TEXAN. These partners represent some of the state’s most dedicated supporters of Texas agriculture, manufacturing, and small business innovation.

“GO TEXAN remains not just a brand, but a community,” Commissioner Miller added. “This year’s growth shows that Texans believe in buying local, promoting local, and lifting the small businesses that keep our state strong. Under my watch, we’re going to keep that momentum going.”

For more information on the GO TEXAN program and to join, visit GOTEXAN.org.

THE COMMISSIONER'S ADDRESS



OPINION: WHAT A DIFFERENCE AN ADMINISTRATION MAKES

By Commissioner Sid Miller

If you want proof that one person really can make a difference, you do not need to look any further than the fields, ranches, and backroads of the Lone Star State. In Texas agriculture, Washington's decisions are not abstract. We feel them in our soil, in our water, and in the livelihoods of every farmer, rancher, and landowner who calls Texas home. And let me tell you: thanks to Donald Trump, we feel the difference an administration makes.

Not too long ago, during the Biden administration, the Texas Department of Agriculture spent too much of its time fending off federal agencies that had run clean out of common sense. Instead of cooperation, we got courtrooms. Instead of partnerships, we

got federal dictates dropped on our producers. Nowhere was that fight more obvious or more outrageous than in the battle over Waters of the United States, or WOTUS.

Under previous leadership in Washington, the EPA tried to claim authority over every puddle, playa lake, stock tank, ditch, bar ditch, and dry creek bed in Texas. They acted like they owned every raindrop that touched Texas soil. A rancher could not clean out a ditch. A farmer could barely move dirt after a storm. A landowner could not make routine improvements without wondering if some bureaucrat 1,500 miles away would slap them with fines, which they did.

That was not regulation. That was a federal land-grab by paperwork, part of their 30x30 agenda, and a tax on rural America.

Under my watch, Texas did not sit and let this happen; we pushed back. We took the EPA to court. We challenged their maps, their definitions, their overreach, and their attempt to turn every property owner in Texas into a tenant of the federal government. I personally filed as a ranch owner myself, not an elected official, to fight for our rights.

But today, our world looks different because leadership in the White House looks different. Instead of spending our time

battling the EPA, we are finally working with them. That happened because a new administration recognized what the last one did not: farmers and ranchers, not the federal government, are the best stewards of the land. No one cares more about clean water than the people who depend on it every single day.

But the change goes even deeper than cooperation. It reaches all the way to our markets, affecting American leverage on the world stage.

While some folks in Washington like to wring their hands every time America stands up for itself, the truth is that tariffs work when they are used with discipline, strength, and purpose. Texas producers know this better than anyone. We have seen global competitors undercut our prices for years. We have watched foreign governments manipulate markets, subsidize their exports, and dump cheap products into our supply chain. That is not free trade.

When the Trump administration put tariffs on the table, the world finally listened. Those tariffs opened doors that had been closed for a decade or more. China came back to the negotiating table because it knew the United States meant business. Mexico and other trading partners stopped dragging their feet and started honoring long-overdue commitments. American soybeans, cotton, beef, and grain regained leverage and respect in international markets.



Just last year, the Biden administration was pushing a plan that would have taken 30% of productive land out of use, and tried to do so without so much as a vote in Congress. The previous administration even tried to take over a huge swath of West Texas under the guise of protecting endangered species, and Texans rose up against that land grab.

But just a year later, President Trump has rolled back these half-cocked and dangerous federal overreaches, entrusting farmers and ranchers with the stewardship of the land God has given them to look after. What happens at that state level matters because federal power has limits. Private property rights are as sacred to the American experience as any other right given to us under God. If the federal government oversteps again, I will be the first one to saddle up and push them back. But for now, we finally have an administration that respects state leadership, local control, and cowboy logic.

Texas is stronger because of it. Our farmers and ranchers are safer because of it. And rural America is better off because of it.

What a difference an administration makes.

HOWDY TO OUR NEW PARTNERS



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El Rey Chorizo

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HOSTED BY COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

TDA ORIGINAL

TEXAS OUR TEXAS



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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

A photograph of Commissioner Sid Miller, a man in a white cowboy hat, white long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and a large silver belt buckle. He is standing next to a brown horse with a white blaze on its face. The background shows a dirt area with a fence and bare trees.

**HERE FOR
TEXAS**



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