

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES
2010-2011 LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST
HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

TDA's Role in Healthy Lifestyles

By supporting Texas farmers and ranchers, the Texas Department of Agriculture has for many years assisted those industries that put food on our tables. In 2003, TDA's role in the nutritional health of Texans expanded when it began administering the federal Child Nutrition Programs — the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. In 2007, TDA also assumed administration of several special nutrition programs.

TDA began a four-year implementation plan of the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy (TPSNP) in participating schools in 2006. The TPSNP goes beyond USDA's nutritional requirements, making it one of the country's most progressive and commended state policies. These requirements include limiting access to foods of minimal nutritional value and competitive foods, reducing fat content, and emphasizing fruits and vegetables.

Healthy Lifestyles Needs

Although the TPSNP has improved Texas schoolchildren's diets, the state continues to face a childhood obesity crisis. The Trust for America's Health ranked Texas 6th in childhood obesity, with 19 percent of children ages 10 to 17 overweight. Data have also suggested obesity rates among younger children continue to increase. While decreased physical activity and increased access to unhealthy foods are the primary contributors to childhood obesity, lack of nutrition education compounds the issue.

Texas schools have risen to the challenge and found innovative ways to comply with the TPSNP without sacrificing variety, quality, or palatability. It has been expensive to change methods of preparation and expand menu options. School districts face enormous financial constraints and have made many positive changes, despite these limitations. They should receive recognition to encourage continued innovation.

LAR Exceptional Item #3 – Nutrition Initiative

With these issues in mind, the Texas Department of Agriculture is requesting \$50 million to reward schools for best practices in nutrition and to support nutrition education. This request takes a comprehensive approach, recognizing schools for their successes as well as addressing those areas where more can be done. Nutrition education can be effectively taught in preschool programs and afterschool initiatives, as well as through mentoring and outreach in middle and high schools. Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples proposes this as a collaborative effort with TDA, the Texas Education Agency and the Department of State Health Services. Altogether, the proposal involves a coordinated state investment of more than \$100 million to raise awareness of the 3E's of Healthy Living – Education Exercise, and Eating Right.

TDA Healthy Lifestyles Funding Summary

	2008-2009 Biennium	2010-2011 Biennium		
		Base	Exceptional Item #3	Total LAR
General Revenue	\$10.6 million	\$11.0 million	\$50.0 million	\$61.0 million
Federal Funds	\$633.7 million	\$717.9 million	-	\$717.9 million
Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$644.3 million</i>	<i>\$728.9 million</i>	<i>\$50.0 million</i>	<i>\$778.9 million</i>