551 Department of Agriculture

The mission of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is to partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles, and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

Like the agriculture industry, TDA's mission is diverse yet targeted to meet the unique challenges facing today's agriculture industry and the state as a whole.

Every Texan experiences the rewards of an affordable, dependable supply of food, fiber and fuel provided by Texas agriculture producers; and every Texan reaps the benefits of services performed by TDA.

Much like our state's farmers and ranchers, TDA has a tradition of approaching our responsibilities in the most efficient and effective way possible. The agency's FY 2014/2015 Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR) continues this tradition.

Significant Changes in Policy and Provision of Service
Since the 2006/2007 biennium, the Legislature has assigned new responsibilities and merged other state agencies into TDA to better streamline state initiatives and minimize overlap of duties. With each new task, TDA has made strides in improving accountability and efficiency of the transferred programs and continues to look for new and more efficient ways to do business. Most recently, the 82nd Legislature had to make significant cuts to TDA's general revenue and cost recovery programs. Additionally, TDA took on new responsibilities with the transfer of the Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) to TDA. It should also be noted that TDRA also received significant cuts to its general revenue appropriations prior to the transfer to TDA.

TDA reorganized its entire agency structure to reduce costs and change business practices to meet the needs of the new budget. Through restructure, reduction in force and elimination of services with stakeholder input, the agency is operating within its new parameters.

New Funding Request
TDA is not proposing new funding requests in this LAR.

Agency Process for 10% Biennial Budget Reduction Options
TDA took significant cuts during the last biennium, eliminated over 100 positions and were required to increase some fees to meet funding requirements. TDA will continue its record of the past 6 years of implementing efficiency measures and returning funds to the state treasury and the taxpayers of Texas.

Additional proposed reductions include elimination of two grant programs and reductions in an additional four grant programs. Finally, further agency efficiency and operation reductions would account for the remaining proposal.

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