It’s A New Day at the TDA

AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS under COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

ACCOMPLISHMENT HIGHLIGHTS

INCREASED CONSUMER PROTECTION
In the last year, TDA conducted more food safety inspections, more accuracy checks of gas pumps and commercial scales than ever before — all to protect you. MORE INSIDE

GREATER EFFICIENCY
TDA conducted more inspections to serve you, but we restructured our processes to make them more cost-effective with fewer miles driven, lower fuel costs and better fleet management. MORE INSIDE

HEALTHIER KIDS
Commissioner Miller has made it his mission to have healthier Texas school kids! Thanks to his Farm Fresh Initiative, more kids are introduced to healthy, tasty, locally grown food every day. More local products were bought by the USDA for Texas schools than the year before! MORE INSIDE

MARKETING THE BEST OF TEXAS
Under Commissioner Miller, the GO TEXAN marketing program has soared. Designed to help Texas companies market their products, the GO TEXAN program now has more members, better member benefits, more positive exposure for our members and even a NASCAR truck to cheer for! MORE INSIDE

SELLING TEXAS TO THE WORLD
We all know Texas has the best locally grown food and agriculture products in the world. Commissioner Miller and the team at TDA have traveled to almost every continent in the globe to let everyone else know, too. MORE INSIDE

BOOSTING RURAL TEXAS
Through the efficient use of state grants and loans, the TDA has provided a much-needed boost to small communities across the Lone Star State. From assisting farmers in need to supporting local food banks to helping repair rural infrastructure, TDA is helping rural Texas remain a great place to live and raise a family. MORE INSIDE

You may not know it, but the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) touches your life almost every day. From the gas pump you used to fill up your car this morning to the salsa you’re eating at dinner, TDA was there to help. From the healthy lunches at your child’s school to the scales used to weigh your luggage at the airport, TDA was there, too. From our role as the state consumer protection agency to administering school lunches and marketing Texas products, the TDA is a diverse and busy place. We work hard every day to serve you.

Since I was sworn into office in 2015, I’ve also worked diligently to make this agency better. Enclosed is just a glimpse of the many ways we’re working better, faster and more efficiently for you. As always, it is my honor to serve as your Texas Agriculture Commissioner and remind you that Texas Agriculture Matters!

Your Servant,

Sid Miller
Texas Agriculture Commissioner

Howdy, Neighbors!
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PROTECTING TEXAS CONSUMERS

The Texas Department of Agriculture is THE consumer protection agency for Texas, inspecting everything from eggs to BBQ restaurant scales and gas pumps to ensure that Texas consumers get what they pay for. Commissioner Miller’s changes have increased inspections while reducing costs.

FUEL PUMP INSPECTIONS
- Inspections for pump accuracy . . . . . UP ↑ 27%
- Inspections for fuel quality . . . . . . UP ↑ 80%
- Frequency of inspections INCREASED from once every eight years to once every 24 months
- Commissioner Miller SAVED $300,000 by cancelling a costly inspection logistics contract
- New fuel Consumer Information Sticker led to a 14% INCREASE in fuel complaints and better protection for consumers
- TDA inspectors looking for illegal CREDIT CARD SKIMMERS at fuel pumps that steal consumers personal data and credit card information.

AGRICULTURE-RELATED INSPECTIONS
- Egg Inspections . . . . . . . . . . UP ↑ 55%
- Nursery / Floral Inspections . . . . . UP ↑ 15%
- Organic Operation Inspections . . . . UP ↑ 183%
- In first 90 days of 2015, TDA ELIMINATED a two-and-a-half year backlog in organic certifications.

COMMERCIAL SCALE REGISTRATIONS AND INSPECTIONS
An important responsibility of the TDA is to register all scales used to sell a product to the public. Created by Commissioner Miller in 2015, Operation Maverick is an effort to identify unregistered scales at businesses across the state and bring them into compliance. This effort increased consumer protection by ensuring commercial scales are accurate and visible to the consumer.

- Sale-by-weight scale inspections . . . . . . UP ↑ 75%
- New registrations (OPERATION MAVERICK) . . . . UP ↑ 385%
- TDA now conducts PACKAGE INSPECTIONS to ensure pre-packaged food sold by weight is accurate.
- TDA also now conducts bar code PRICE SCANNER INSPECTIONS to ensure prices charged for items are accurate.

Did You Know?
By restructuring TDA operations, eliminating waste and boosting efficiency, Commissioner Miller increased inspections while reducing the number of miles driven by our inspectors.

MORE 1.5 MILLION FEWER MILES
INSPECTIONS DRIVEN

OPERATION MAVERICK

INSPECTION LOCATIONS
Pawn Shops
Jewelry Shops
Yogurt Shops
Candy Stores
Meat Markets
BBQ Restaurants
Buffet Restaurants
Laundries
Recycling Centers
Hardware Stores
Tobacco Shops
Bait Shops
Shipping Locations
many more
The TDA GO TEXAN program helps market and promote the products, culture and communities that call Texas home. Our iconic GO TEXAN brand, in the shape of Texas, has become a recognized symbol of the best Texas has to offer.

- GO TEXAN membership INCREASED
- Historic partnership with AM Racing to place GO TEXAN logo on race truck for NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES
- Partnered with HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO to promote Texas wine, including a new belt buckle award presented to the top Texas winery
- State Fair of Texas Food and Fiber Pavilion re-named GO TEXAN PAVILION for 2016 Fair
- HIGHEST participation rate in history by GO TEXAN members participating in the TDA-managed Pioneer Brand GO TEXAN General Store at the State Fair of Texas
- Commissioner Miller created the first GO TEXAN AMBASSADOR program to involve former Dallas Cowboys Super Bowl champs and other Texas sports stars as advocates for the GO TEXAN program and its members.

TExAS GLObal Initiative

At Commissioner Miller's direction, the TDA has expanded international agriculture trade programs and coordinated activities on every continent, except Antarctica. Trade missions to countries like China have opened up new profitable markets around the world for Texas agriculture.

COMMISSIONER MILLER / TDA STAFF TRADE MISSIONS:

- ARGENTINA
- AUSTRALIA
- CANADA
- CHINA
- COLOMBIA
- COSTA RICA
- CUBA
- ECUADOR
- GHANA
- GERMANY
- INDIA
- ISRAEL
- ITALY
- MALAYSIA
- MEXICO
- NETHERLANDS
- NICARAGUA
- PAKISTAN
- PANAMA
- PARAGUAY
- PHILIPPINES
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SOUTH KOREA
- SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
- THAILAND
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

IMPROVING SERVICES

- INCREASED pesticide audits . . . UP↑ 334%
- STREAMLINED process for pesticide applicators and provided more safeguards for consumers
- IMPROVED continuing education programs with Texas A&M AgriLife
- Brought agency from DEAD LAST TO TOP 5 of state agencies in contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses

LEARN MORE AT TEXASAGRICULTURE.GOV
Strengthening Rural Texas

A top priority for Commissioner Miller and TDA is keeping rural Texas strong. From establishing the first Office of Water at the agency to administering state and federal grants targeted at helping rural communities, TDA is doing all it can to strengthen rural Texas.

- Created TDA OFFICE OF WATER to ensure agriculture is represented in state water policy discussions
- Awarded more than $73 MILLION to rural communities for infrastructure improvements
- Launched ENTERPRISE REVOLVING FUND to make loans available to assist small businesses in rural communities
- Launched CAPITAL FOR TEXAS loan program for small businesses in rural Texas
- Made $9.6 MILLION available to rural communities to repair infrastructure affected by natural disasters
- Provided more than $120,000 to ag producers impacted by disasters like wildfires and floods through the privately-funded TDA STATE OF TEXAS AGRICULTURE RELIEF (STAR) Fund
- Received $17 MILLION federal award to expand infrastructure for agriculture-based renewable fuels
- Awarded more than $8.7 MILLION to 139 organizations providing home-delivered meals in 161 counties
- Awarded Feeding Texans program $5.6 MILLION to distribute 42 million pounds of surplus agricultural products through 21 Texas food banks

Farm Fresh Fridays

Commissioner Miller created the innovative Farm Fresh Friday farm-to-school program to encourage Texas schools to use fresh, locally grown food at least once a week. Using a carrot instead of a stick, Commissioner Miller lifted TDA mandates on local schools to allow them to launch creative farm-to-table programs like “Meet the Farmer Day.” He also launched new educational efforts to retrain cafeteria workers to prepare appealing, healthy and fresh foods in our Texas schools. Commissioner Miller also created the Farm Fresh Network to connect Texas agricultural producers with child care centers, summer food sites and Texas schools.

- ELIMINATED TDA MANDATES to give Texas schools more local control over school nutrition
- Created MEET THE FARMER DAY at Texas schools to educate kids about where their food comes from
- Encouraged SCHOOL GARDENS to give kids firsthand experience in growing nutritious food for themselves
- Developed MEAL APPEAL UNIVERSITIES to retrain cafeteria workers to make their meals more appealing, healthy and nutritious
- Encouraged schools to make school nutrition more exciting with FOOD TRUCKS and FOOD COURTS featuring healthy and tasty meals
- TDA hosts the LOCAL PRODUCTS CHALLENGE every year to encourage schools to use more Texas-grown food

Buying More Texas Food

In 2015, thanks in part to Commissioner Miller’s new FARM-TO-SCHOOL programs, USDA purchased more Texas agricultural products than the previous year.

- Partnered with JUMP WITH JILL, a live-action, high-energy music and dance show to teach kids that eating healthy, locally grown food can be fun and cool
- Created ART CONTEST series to celebrate National School Lunch and National School Breakfast weeks
- Launched new hands-on, interactive educational FOOD NUTRITION BOOTHS at the State Fair of Texas, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and others