

Ag Matters



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



July 2016

Summer Meals Feed Texas Children

We often equate summer with fun and carefree days. However, for some of our youngest Texans, summer means a time of food insecurity. Ensuring all Texas children have access to adequate nutrition is a top priority of mine here at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). That's why our Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is so important. Each year, this vital program helps ensure Texas children don't go hungry when they're out of school for the summer.



TDA partners with community organizations to serve summer meals. Children ages 18 and younger are eligible, and it is truly our privilege to help connect these kids with healthy meals that keep them fueled up for summer fun. It's easy to find a summer meal site near you:

- Call 211,
- Visit TDA's online meal site locator at www.summerfood.org or
- Text **FOODTX** to 877-877.

If your family needs help this summer, check out a summer meal site in your area. We want to make sure no Texas child goes hungry, and the best part is, these kids will return to school in the fall well-nourished and ready to learn!

Your servant,

Sid Miller

State Fair Celebrates Texas Agriculture, Be Part of the Action



The countdown is on for the State Fair of Texas, which kicks off **Sept. 30** in Dallas! This year's fair is themed *Celebrating Texas Agriculture*, and TDA is looking forward to being part of the action in our Food and Fiber Pavilion. We all know the roots of agriculture run deep in the heart of Texas, and everyone at TDA looks forward to celebrating those roots at the best state fair in the country.

Each year, the Food and Fiber Pavilion is home to GO TEXAN members, fun activities, cooking demonstrations, educational exhibits, the GO TEXAN General Store and so much more.

TDA recently announced opportunities for GO TEXAN members to promote their products in the Food and Fiber Pavilion. Spots are open on a first-come, first-served basis, so be sure to [check out](#) the opportunities today!

New Partnership Brings Timely Crop Estimates



TDA is excited to announce a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Services (USDA-NASS) to provide in-season district-level estimates on acreage, yield and production for Texas wheat, corn, cotton and sorghum crops. What does this mean? For Texas farmers, it means you'll have access to timely, accurate statistics on in-season crops, including wheat, corn, cotton and sorghum. These stats will help you with resource management planning, transport decisions and marketing strategies.

[Read](#) more about this partnership and its impact on ag interests in Texas.

Eat Local This July During The Annual GO TEXAN Restaurant Round-Up

Celebrate the tastes of Texas throughout July as you dine out at GO TEXAN restaurants during the annual [GO TEXAN Restaurant Round-Up](#). Each year, restaurant round-up highlights GO TEXAN member restaurants that are committed to serving menu items with ingredients sourced from local farmers, ranchers and other producers. We hope you will dine out at participating restaurants in your area to show your support for GO TEXAN.

From shrimp and vegetables to wine and artisan cheeses, if it's from Texas, you can bet it's the freshest and most flavorful option around. [Find](#) a GO TEXAN restaurant near you and keep an eye out [here](#) for special events planned at restaurants around the state. More events will be added in the coming days.

Annual Nutrition Conference Kicks Off in Austin Today

TDA's annual [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (CACFP) Conference kicks off in Austin today and runs through the end of the week. Our CACFP partners will participate in educational sessions on topics ranging from implementing Farm to Child Care and preparing fresh vegetables to tracking expenses and creating enrollment records.

More than 200 million CACFP meals are served in Texas each year, and the conference takes on special significance in 2016 as USDA recently announced new nutrition guidelines for CACFP. The new regulations ensure the menus at child care centers and adult day care centers include more whole grains, as well as a greater variety of fruits and vegetables.

TDA experts will be on hand for the conference to provide guidance on how to successfully comply with the new regulations. In addition to learning new things, CACFP partners will have a chance to network with each other and share their ideas for building healthier communities across the Lone Star State.

We're working hard every day at TDA to ensure a healthier future for all Texans — CACFP is just one way of doing that!

Cost-Share Program Helps Cotton Farmers



Texas cotton farmers have taken a beating over the past few years, with many smaller operations simply having to call it quits and walk away. Cotton prices have fallen, and there is more competition from international markets and a worldwide surplus of cotton. For the first time, USDA has stepped in with a cost-share program to help out farmers with ginning costs.

The program will be a one-time payment to assist with ginning costs for cotton farmers. Cotton ginning is a necessary step before the cotton lint can be marketed for fiber or for the separated seed to be marketed for livestock feed or cottonseed oil production. The benefits of this new program will be felt across the

market and in many rural communities right here in Texas that depend on these farmers and businesses.

Sign-ups began last month and will run until **Aug. 5**. Producers can visit their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) to sign up. Payments will be calculated using a producer's 2015 cotton acreage reported to FSA and multiplied by 40 percent of the average ginning cost for each production region. Payments to Texas producers are slated to be \$36.97 per acre. There is a payment limit, income restrictions and other regulations, so be sure to check with your local FSA office about the rules.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the program.

ICYMI: Commissioner Miller Visits with KCEN-TV



Commissioner Miller sat down with KCEN-TV to discuss the impact statewide flooding has had on farmers and the planting of their crops. [Check out](#) the interview to hear more about the impact Mother Nature has had on cotton, corn and hay crops.

Want Daily Market News Delivered to Your Inbox?

Look no further than TDA for the latest market news and current crop prices. Each weekday, TDA compiles the latest numbers from cash and futures markets for the major ag commodities in Texas and provides them in an easy-to-read *Daily Market News Summary* that's delivered to subscribers' inboxes each afternoon. Interested in having these delivered directly to you? Simply click [here](#) to sign up for market news.

TDA Partners With Rainwater Catchment Advisory Board

Commissioner Miller is excited to announce that TDA is partnering with the Texas Rainwater Catchment Association (TRCA) to assist in administering TRCA's rainwater catchment certification process. This partnership stems from TDA's Office of Water efforts to address critical water issues across the state.

"With the hot Texas summer underway, water conservation is on everybody's mind," Commissioner Miller said. "The Texas Rainwater Catchment Association is doing important work to help Texans conserve water, and I am excited to partner with them to ensure the rainwater catchment certification process will protect Texas consumers."

Rainwater catchment, also called rainwater harvesting, is the method of catching, storing and using rainwater for irrigation and other uses. TDA and TRCA will work together to establish the Texas Rainwater Harvester's Design and Installer's Certification Program. This first-of-its kind, voluntary program will certify individuals who install rainwater catchment systems. As more Texans work to conserve and reuse water through rainwater catchment, this certification program will allow consumers to identify and hire certified professionals with confidence. Stay tuned for more on this partnership and certification.

GO TEXAN Takes The Lead at Texas Motor Speedway



Last month, the *Rattlesnake 400* at Texas Motor Speedway brought NASCAR Camping World Truck Series fans together for Friday night racing under the lights. AM Racing driver Austin Wayne Self proudly displays the GO TEXAN logo on his truck each time he races, and we are happy to report Self finished No. 13 in the Texas race. [Check out](#) photos from race day, and be sure to cheer on GO TEXAN as Self races around the track this season.

