



March 2016

Expanding Agriculture's Footprint Across The Globe

Agriculture touches each of our lives multiple times a day, each and every single day. Expanding Texas agriculture's reach across the globe has been an important initiative of mine since I took office as Agriculture Commissioner. So much so that last year alone, myself or someone from the team here at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) visited every continent on the globe, except Antarctica, to grow trade opportunities, create jobs, expand markets and spread the word that *Texas agriculture matters*.

Each of the trade missions has been focused on how TDA can work to develop trade relations and new markets for Texas agricultural products. Our farmers and ranchers produce the highest-quality food, meat and fibers, and we want everyone to know about it. With this same mission in mind, TDA Deputy Commissioner Jason Fearneyhough led our team, along with state lawmakers and representatives from the cattle, rice, sorghum and wheat industries, to Cuba just last month.

TDA wants to continue establishing and growing relationships with countries around the globe, so that Texas farmers and ranchers can tap into new markets for their goods. With this comes many exciting opportunities for Texas, and I couldn't be more proud to be a part of it.

[Read](#) more about the trade mission to Cuba, and remember friends, *Texas agriculture matters*.

Your servant,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sid Miller'.

Sid Miller

Ready ... Set ... Celebrate Texas Agriculture During School Breakfast Week



Mark your calendars, and join TDA and schools across Texas as we celebrate School Breakfast Week **March 7 through 11**. All throughout the week, students will “Discover the Great Plate of Texas!” and learn how to “Power Up” with the first meal of the day. TDA helps schools put a local spin on this national celebration with resources they can use to add a serving of Texas pride to the most important meal of the day.

Everything young Texans need for a healthy breakfast is produced in abundance right here in the Lone Star State, and we always encourage students and their schools to make local agriculture part of healthy meals. Incorporating local products into school breakfasts is good for Texas agriculture, and it's good for Texas students.

Research shows that eating breakfast can help students succeed in the classroom. School Breakfast Week is a great reminder for everyone, especially children, that a healthy breakfast will keep them ahead of the curve in the classroom. Plus, it gives school children an opportunity to discover all that Texas agriculture has to offer!

Find more information and School Breakfast Week resources [online](#).

Mark Your Calendars, It's Rodeo Season



Rodeo season continues throughout the Lone Star State, so mark your calendars and plan to catch some of the action. Rodeos are a Texas tradition, and a great way to connect with agriculture, enjoy some family fun and see fierce competition in action. Plus, rodeos are the greatest shows on dirt!

Upcoming events:

- [Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo](#): March 1 through 20
- [Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show](#): March 11 through 20
- [Rodeo Austin](#): March 12 through 26

See you at the rodeo!

Wanted: Texas Quilters to Showcase Their Talents

TDA is kicking off the 2016 Quilt Block Competition, and we need your help. Quilters from across the Lone Star State are encouraged to participate. This year's theme is *Texas Wine and Floral – Two Texas Treasures*, and it celebrates these two shining stars of Texas agriculture.

"The best things in life spring from the Texas earth," Commissioner Miller said. "The same rich Texas soil that gives birth to the wine grape brings to life a wide array of colorful Texas plants. When you pair these two Texas treasures together, you will make the ultimate Lone Star statement."

Each contestant will use a variety of fabrics to create a quilt block to submit to TDA. A panel of judges will select the winning entries, which will then be pieced together into a quilt and unveiled in September at the 2016 State Fair of Texas.



A limited number of participant packets are available. It costs \$20 for each packet, which includes the fabrics to be used in the design, tips and techniques for developing the block and additional information about the contest theme. The deadline for submissions is **June 10, 2016**.

[Click here](#) to learn more and request your participant packet.

TDA would like to thank this year's contest sponsors: [Hobbs Bonded Fibers](#) of Waco, [Tandy Leather Factory](#) of Fort Worth and "[designs by tana](#)" of Crowley. The final quilt will be designed and constructed by [Terri Vogds](#) of Denton and quilted by Maria Hall of Flower Mound.

ICYMI: Fall Creek Vineyards Awarded Commissioner's Top Winery Award at Rodeo Uncorked!



Commissioner Miller was pleased to present GO TEXAN member [Fall Creek Vineyards](#) and its owners, Ed and Susan Auler, with the Commissioner's Top Texas Winery Award at the Rodeo Uncorked! Roundup and Best Bites Competition at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Texas is the fifth-largest wine producing state in the nation. The Lone Star State is home to more than 360 wineries, including Fall Creek Vineyards. Special thanks to all of our GO TEXAN member

wineries who are helping boost Texas' status as a top wine-producing state.

Congratulations again to Fall Creek Vineyards and the Aulers for their award at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo!

Spotlight: Border Inspection Process Receives Much-Needed Boost



Every day for the rest of your life, three times a day, you'll need a farmer. That's why TDA is working to expedite agricultural inspections at the border and improve processes at our ports of entry. TDA awarded more than \$650,000 to the South Texas Assets Consortium to facilitate a pilot program to do just that.

[Learn more](#) about the grant, and hear directly from Commissioner Miller why this new initiative is so important in the above video.

Last Call: GROW Nominations for 2015-2016 School Year

TDA has the privilege of honoring Texas middle and high school students each month with our GROW award. Recently, TDA honored [Shelby Salge](#), a junior from Travis High School in Richmond, Texas. Shelby is an active FAA member, member of band and Girl Scouts, and a great student. TDA's regional field representative, Kristin Lambrecht, made a trip out to Richmond to present Shelby with her award.



"I have to tip my hat to Shelby for earning this month's GROW award," Commissioner Miller said. "Thanks to young leaders like Shelby, the future of Texas looks brighter than ever. I couldn't be more proud to honor Shelby, as she symbolizes everything I look for in a great leader — a strong work ethic, dedication to community and family, and a can-do attitude."

If you know a deserving student in your area, nominate them for the GROW award today! We're working on March's winner right now, but you still have two opportunities for your nomination to be considered — April and May of this school year. [Nominate](#) a deserving student near you today!

Grant Applications Available, Program Encourages Better Health for Preschool Children

TDA is now accepting applications for our 3E's grant programs, which are designed to promote better health and nutrition programs and prevent obesity among preschool children in the state. The objective of the 3E's program is to increase awareness of the importance of good nutrition and to encourage children's health and well-being through the 3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right.

TDA facilitates two grant programs — [Expanding the 3E's](#) (X3E) and [Establishing the 3E's](#) (E3E) — to achieve these goals.

Only K-12 public schools and independent school districts (ISDs) are eligible for Expanding the 3E's (X3E), which rewards the expansion of existing nutrition education programs. A public school can apply for up to \$10,000 per campus to enhance its new or existing Farm Fresh Friday or coordinated health program (CATCH, SPARK, etc.). ISDs can apply for a maximum award amount of \$50,000.

The Establishing the 3E's (E3E) program incentivizes the creation of new nutrition education programs in child care institutions and community organizations. It is intended for child care contracting entities (independent or sponsor) in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or community organizations to establish their Healthier CACFP Award Program. This grant can also be used to expand an existing wellness program.

The deadline to apply for these grants are as follows:

- **April 12, 2016** for Expanding the 3E's (X3E)
- **April 14, 2016** for Establishing the 3E's (E3E)

To learn more about the requirements, qualifications and to download your application, [click here](#).

Commissioner Miller Challenges You to Spot The Mark



GO TEXAN.[®]

The next time you're out shopping or just having fun around this great state of ours, keep your eyes open for the world-renowned GO TEXAN mark, with its signature brand in the shape of Texas. The GO TEXAN mark helps set Texas-made and Texas-grown products apart from the competition.

When you see a product proudly displaying the GO TEXAN mark, get out your smartphone and snap a photo of the mark on the product. Then, share it with your friends on social media. Tell us where you saw it and tag your Facebook, Twitter or Instagram post with the #GOTEXAN hashtag to get in on the action!

Remember: You can find the GO TEXAN mark on all kinds of items like potato chips, meat, soda, salsa, eggs, soap, cheese, produce, wine and hundreds of other products. You'll also see it on billboards, signs and storefronts. So next time you spot the mark, have a little fun, post it to social media with the #GOTEXAN hashtag and know that you're supporting the products and businesses that call Texas home.

