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March 2017

Spring is Around The Corner

With spring less than two weeks away, I'm reminded that the most bountiful time of year is almost here! Spring represents new growth and opportunity for the future. It's a busy time for our farmers and ranchers, along with many of the home gardeners out there who have begun planting. Spring is a great time to get the whole family outside, connect with the earth and teach kids where our food comes from.

This land that we live on provides us with blessings beyond words, and one of our biggest priorities here at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is cultivating the connection young Texans have with agriculture. It's about teaching them where their food comes from and what it takes to get meals on their plates. That's why School Breakfast Week, which is taking place right now, is so important, and why we work with schools to build connections to incorporate locally grown food into school meals.

As we enjoy the fruit of agriculture's labor this spring and summer, let us remember each day where our food comes from and why *Texas agriculture matters!*

Your servant,

Sid Miller

Texas Students Take the Breakfast Challenge During School Breakfast Week

Schools across Texas are partnering with TDA to serve up fun and excitement along with a healthy breakfast during School Breakfast Week, which started March 6 and runs through March 10. Incorporating artwork inspired by winners of TDA's [You ART What You Eat](#) statewide student art contest, TDA developed School Breakfast Week posters, flyers, social media ads and other resources that encourage students to *Take the Breakfast Challenge*.

All Texas schools in the School Breakfast Program received posters, and many school nutrition directors are using themed participation charts for elementary schools and selfie station backdrops for middle and high schools. School Breakfast Week offers all of us an opportunity to engage students in important discussions about making good nutrition and Texas agriculture part of the most important meal of the day.



Join us in promoting healthy lifestyles for young Texans by celebrating School Breakfast Week this year. For more information, click [here](#).

Historic Handshake Represents Ongoing Partnership Between Texas and Tamaulipas



In late February, Commissioner Miller and Francisco Garcia Cabeza de Vaca, governor of the neighboring Mexican state of Tamaulipas, met at the intersection of the Texas-Mexico border on the international bridge spanning the Rio Grande at Laredo for a unique friendship exchange event. Governor Cabeza de Vaca and Commissioner Miller were also joined by Tamaulipas Secretary of Rural Development Gonzalo Alemán Migliolo, the mayors of both Laredo and Nuevo Laredo and other local officials. The meeting focused on the importance of trade and

border security for both Texas and Tamaulipas.

“With 17 border crossings between Texas and Tamaulipas, our two states trade a billion dollars of goods every day — that’s about 80 percent of all trade between the U.S. and Mexico,” Commissioner Miller said.

[See](#) the action for yourself, and read more about the meeting and how Commissioner Miller is working with international partners to foster trade relationships [here](#).

Rule Change Update: Feral Hog Bait

There have been a number of questions from the public, farmers and ranchers since Commissioner Miller announced the emergency rule change to the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) that classified a warfarin-based hog lure as a state-limited-use pesticide. The emergency rule declared the hog bait to be a “state-limited-use” pesticide, which imposes safeguards against the misuse of the product, including limiting sale by licensed dealers and limiting the purchase to licensed and trained applicators. Additionally, the product label requires special feeders to limit access to the bait to hogs only.

TDA created a [Web page](#) to provide you with all the facts regarding the use of this pesticide and how it impacts Texans across the state. You can also find a [fact sheet](#) and feedback form on this page that allows you to learn more and provide the agency with your comments.

However, it is important to note that on March 2, a district judge in the 345th District Court granted the Temporary Restraining Order requested by Wild Boar Meats, LLC to suspend the emergency rule put in place by TDA. The immediate effect of last week’s ruling is to temporarily do away with those safeguards, as the Temporary Restraining Order removes all TDA restrictions on the bait. [Read](#) the full announcement about this change.

Legislative Update

The legislative session is underway, and that means TDA continues to work hard to advocate for our farmers and ranchers and be the voice of agriculture echoing throughout the hallways of our state capitol. Last month, TDA was brought before the Senate Finance Committee to give an account of our budget observations and goals from the past and upcoming years. Commissioner Miller delivered a thoughtful testimony and remained steadfast on advocating for the department, and reminding senate leaders of TDA’s responsibility to protect consumers and efficiently serve the millions of people who call Texas home.



Additionally, committee assignments have rolled in for the Texas Senate and House of Representatives. Assignments are as follows:

- House Agriculture Committee appointed Rep. Tracy King, *Chair*, and Rep. Mary Gonzales, *Vice-Chair*.
- Senate Agriculture Committee appointed Sen. Charles Perry, *Chair*, and Sen. Jose Rodriguez, *Vice-Chair*.
- House Appropriations Committee appointed Rep. John Zerwas, *Chair*, and Rep. Oscar Longoria, *Vice-Chair*.
- Senate Finance Committee appointed Sen. Jane Nelson, *Chair*, and Sen. Juan Hinojosa, *Vice-Chair*.
- House Natural Resources Committee appointed Rep. Lyle Larson, *Chair*, and Rep. Dade Phelan, *Vice-Chair*.
- Senate Natural Resource Committee appointed Sen. Craig Estes, *Chair*, and Sen. Judith Zaffirini, *Vice-Chair*.

Commissioner Miller and the entire TDA legislative team are geared up and ready to work with the appointed chairs and members to better serve you — the members of our agriculture community and the great state of Texas.

Art Contest Winners Announced

As we celebrate School Breakfast Week this week, please join TDA in recognizing two young Texans — Haley Neslony of San Antonio and Olivia York of Temple — as winners of TDA's [You ART What You Eat](#) student art contest. This initiative is part of TDA's efforts to promote School Breakfast Week. The winning artwork illustrates this year's theme, *Take the Breakfast Challenge*, and inspired the creation of posters that Texas schools will feature during School Breakfast Week 2017. Olivia earned the top honor in the middle/high school category and Haley won in the elementary division.

Commissioner Miller is inviting all Texas students, just like Olivia and Haley, who are attending a school participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to submit entries for the 2017-2018 contest. TDA will accept entries from March 13-May 15, 2017. Students are asked to create artwork that illustrates the theme *Rock the Day with a Healthy School Lunch* for National School Lunch Week 2017 or *Dive into a Healthy Breakfast* for School Breakfast Week 2018.

[Read](#) more about the contest and learn how you can submit artwork for the 2017-2018 contest.