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# TEXAS AGRICULTURE Matters!

Your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Volume 1  
Issue 2  
Feb. 2020



## Howdy Neighbors!

Welcome to the Texas Agriculture Matters newsletter, your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture in Texas has hit the ground running in 2020. With the approval of the Texas Hemp Plan, we are one step closer to giving our ag producers access to this exciting new crop opportunity.

If you're looking to become involved with TDA this year: Whether you're a quilter, producer looking to export, or a talented student artist, this newsletter will serve you well.

Remember friends, Texas Agriculture Matters!

Sid Miller  
Texas Agriculture Commissioner

## International Year of Plant Health

When we protect plant health, we protect the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the environment in which we live.

Readers of this newsletter needn't be reminded of the importance of agriculture, but it's safe to say the rest of the population takes it for granted. It is a huge success then that The Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations has declared 2020 the International Year of Plant Health.

The year-long initiative contains key messaging which supports current TDA programs and encourages the global community to think about and optimize our global food system. Three of the five key messages of the International Year of Plant Health directly translate to a program within the Environmental and Biosecurity division.

"Be careful when bringing plants and plant products across borders",



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**PLANT HEALTH**

2020

"Make trading in plants and plant products safe by complying with international plant health standards", and "Invest in plant health capacity development, research and outreach".

"Be careful when bringing plants and plant products across borders." This is the focus of Don't Pack a Pest, a federally funded multi-agency initiative that educates international travelers on the importance of the declarations process. **continued on p.3**



# Hemp: The Comeback Crop

TDA and USDA are working together to make sure the Texas Hemp Plan follows federal guidelines.

**A**griculture generally doesn't excite people. For most folks, apart from considering the cotton in their clothes or pausing during a meal to think of the farmer that grew the vegetable on their plate, few think of agriculture in their daily lives. At least that was before the legalization of industrial hemp.

When Congress passed the 2018 Farm Bill legalizing hemp at the federal level, the ag industry has experienced an unprecedented wave of excitement. On the heels of this action, the Texas Legislature took the next step earlier this year and directed the Texas Department of Agriculture

to submit an industrial hemp licensing plan to the federal government for approval.

"The time for industrial hemp has come," said Commissioner Sid Miller. "Industrial hemp is good for our farmers, good for our rural communities, good for our economy and good for our future. This is a great opportunity for Texas farmers." For Texas farmers, hemp represents a new chance to not only survive, but to thrive.

While hemp's illegal cousin marijuana generates a lot of attention in the media and across the internet, it's industrial hemp's versatility that is truly exciting. Because the plant has so many varied uses, as food, fuel, clothing, construction material and more, the economic opportunities it presents



Commissioner Miller speaks at the Texas Hemp Program Public Hearing, Jan. 22, 2020. Photo by Maddison Jaureguito.

are almost limitless. That's why hemp is one of the oldest domesticated crops known to man. It even played a role in the founding of our country. George Washington grew hemp at Mount Vernon to support the needs of his plantation, including rope, thread, canvas and fishing nets. As a matter of fact, hemp is still grown at Mount Vernon today under the **continued on p.5**

TEXAS AGRICULTURE *Matters!*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

*Produced by the Office of Communications  
Editor, Katlyn Gast*

www.TexasAgriculture.gov  
(800) TELL-TDA



## ABOUT COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Sid Miller is an eighth generation farmer and rancher and the 12<sup>th</sup> Commissioner of Agriculture for the great state of Texas. Commissioner Miller has devoted his life to the agriculture industry, and supporting Texas producers and the communities they call home. He is a businessman, rancher, community leader, former ag teacher and former school board member. Commissioner Miller is a rodeo cowboy and holds 12 world championship titles. He is an honors graduate of Tarleton State University in Stephenville, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Agriculture Education.



The declarations process is, of course, a function of Customs and Border Protection (CBP). That agency partners with TDA as travel creates a pathway for the introduction of a pest or disease that could have economic consequences for agriculture within Texas. CBP provide an invaluable front line of defense against the possibility of an exotic invasion introduction of a plant or animal pest. Items brought with passengers classified as 'agricultural items'; fresh fruits, meats, and wooden items can carry with them viruses, bacteria or fungal pathogens and insects and need to be declared when going through Customs. Let's use fruit flies as an insect example of regulatory concern, they are routinely found during CBP inspections of passenger items. While the effects of fruit flies can be undetectable to the untrained eye, CBP agents know what to look for.

With the help of an outsized ovipositor, fruit flies push their eggs beyond the rind and safely within the fruits, the subsequent larvae nibble their way out and what remains of the fruit is unmarketable. Suppression and eradication campaigns are ongoing throughout the United States as a result of recurring introductions and these efforts cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

Texas is home to a USDA facility that supplies sterilized Mexican fruit flies to our own citrus growing region and beyond to Florida and California. The sterilized flies mate with wild flies and produce no offspring, this is called sterile insect technique and can be used as a target-specific, pesticide-free method of pest control. The TDA employs trappers in the citrus growing region who scout for wild Mexican Fruit flies and trigger regulatory action (release of sterilized flies) as needed. These are the efforts for just one exotic invasive insect for whom an effective control strategy

These are the efforts for just one exotic invasive insect for whom an ineffective control strategy is known. So, while it may seem harmless to bring back a mango or cured meats from your adventures, the consequences could be detrimental for agriculture, and costly to you as a taxpayer.

Many people might rationalize bringing items across international boundaries, especially if they see such items in their local grocery stores. The difference between grocery store commodities and items from backyard gardens or local markets

is the processing. For example, mangos shipped to the to the US for consumption are fumigated or irradiated before entry and distribution to consumers, this process ensures that hitchhiking insects are not sold with the fruit. This brings up message number two: "Make trading in plants and plant products safe by complying with international plant health standards". **continued on p.4**



## ABOUT TDA

The Texas Legislature established the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) in 1907. The agency's key objectives are to promote production agriculture, consumer protection, economic development and healthy living. The agriculture commissioner oversees the agency and is elected every four years. The current commissioner, Sid Miller, was elected in 2014. TDA is a diversified state agency that provides value-added services through our regulatory and marketing and initiatives. TDA is headquartered in Austin and has five regional service offices, two sub-offices, three laboratories and five livestock export facilities.

### Mission:

TDA's mission 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.

that hitchhiking insects are not sold with the fruit. This brings up message number two: "Make trading in plants and plant products safe by complying with international plant health standards". Global plant trade requires a cohesive international strategy, this involves methods of cleaning and treating agricultural commodities that mitigate the risk of the transportation of pests.

The Food and Agriculture Organization who organized the IYPH campaign also oversees the International Plant Protection Convention which provides the structure for the regulation of global plant trade. While the USDA has jurisdiction over international trade, TDA is responsible for domestic activities. TDA requires that agricultural goods moving into Texas are free of pests and diseases, if such standards are not met the items are destroyed and rejected. Likewise, other states have similar standards and TDA assists growers in meeting these requirements and providing necessary documentation.

Treatments for international movement and regulatory requirements for producers on commodities like citrus or cotton are based upon ongoing research



or survey work. TDA "Invests in plant health capacity development, research and outreach". Through funding opportunities like the Specialty Crop Block Grant and Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey researchers can study production agriculture in Texas. The results of their research allow TDA to apply smart regulation that will allow industries to thrive. You can learn about projects that TDA has funded and the results of such research, [here](#).

The International Year of Plant Health puts a spotlight on the issues that matter to us most at TDA. Read more about the International Year of Plant Health on the [IYPH 2020 website](#). Share with friends and family or plan your own IYPH event with their outreach guide.

Let us know how you celebrate by tagging #TexasAgricultureMatters, for us it's always about plant health! 🇺🇸



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**PLANT HEALTH**

2020



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations





research project provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill.

Hemp is a variety of the *Cannabis sativa L* species of plants. Marijuana is also *Cannabis*, but contains greater levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical that produces the psychological “high” associated with the plant. By contrast, industrial hemp contains less than .03% THC. Seeds from industrial hemp can be used as food in bread, cereals, and protein powder. Oil derived from these hemp seed can be used as fuel, lubricants, and even cosmetics. Fiber produced from the hemp stalk can be used as rope, netting, canvas, carpet and clothes, among other uses. Parts of the hemp stalk can also be used as fiberboard, concrete, biofuel, paper and cardboard. Hemp is also an ideal rotational crop because it returns nutrients to the soil. As it grows, hemp takes in CO<sub>2</sub>, detoxifies the soil, and helps prevent soil erosion. The parts of the plant left after harvest decompose into the soil, returning valuable nutrients for the next crop.

Yet, the mania surrounding hemp primarily involves three letters: CBD. CBD oil seems to have become a new wonder drug, treating ailments from seizures to anxiety. Because of its popularity, it is certainly seen as a great economic opportunity for Texas agriculture.

However, Commissioner Miller has also worked to remind Texas farmers that with high rewards comes high risk. As with any new enterprise, the production of industrial hemp has significant unknowns that ag producers should consider. From new state and federal regulations and a rapidly developing industry, growing industrial hemp will be challenging. Commissioner Miller has outlined a few of these considerations in a new introductory video, “Growing Industrial Hemp In Texas”.

“Texas is a national leader in production agriculture,” said Miller, “and I expect to add hemp to that list. Farmers should be smart about entering this industry and together we can make Texas into the nation’s first ‘hempire’”.

The Texas Department of Agriculture Hemp Plan has been approved by USDA and the agency is now awaiting final approval of rules. The state hemp licensing program is expected to begin in early spring 2020. 🇹🇽

To learn more about the Texas hemp program and read FAQ's, visit [www.texasagriculture.gov](http://www.texasagriculture.gov).



# Texas Agriculture Profile

India Hearne, owner of Whiski Designs graphics, greetings and goods, is riding her creative western wave in the Big D.

I'm a native Texan-born and raised in East Dallas. I attended art school in New Mexico, but headed back to Texas as quickly as I could! I have always dreamed of owning my own business, as my parents owned a gift shop when I was growing up. When I moved back to Dallas, I decided I wanted to pursue Whiski Designs as my full-time career.

Hand lettering and graphic design have always been an interest and hobby of mine. I started featuring my hand drawn original designs on t-shirts and greeting cards, and it took off from there. My line now has everything from

baby and toddler shirts, kitchen towels, stickers, beer koozies, leather keychains, and more.

After participating in many pop-up artisan markets around Dallas, I decided I wanted to find a more permanent, year round market. I wanted to showcase my designs and goods and build connections with local customers. I found myself showing at The Dallas Farmers Market every weekend under the open-air shed, along with other local vendors and farmers.

After showing there every weekend for about a year and a half, it was time to grow my business even more and open a retail store. On March 30, 2019, I opened my brick & mortar store at The Dallas Farmers Market- directly across from the open-air shed where I started.



Since becoming a GO TEXAN member, I have been able to grow my business on a whole new level.

Whiski Designs has been able to be a part of major Texas events such as the State Fair of Texas, Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, and the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo with the GO TEXAN organization. I am very proud to have the GO TEXAN mark on my products. 🇹🇽

Shop [Whiski Designs](#) and be sure to follow @WhiskiDesigns on Facebook and Instagram.







## Food Insecure Seniors in America

- ✕ 5.5 million seniors (over age 60) are food insecure
- ✕ Everyday, 10,000 people become a senior.
- ✕ Many low-income earning seniors must face spending tradeoffs that can lead to or worsen food insecurity.
- ✕ Food insecure seniors are more likely to experience depression, asthma, chest pain and more.
- ✕ In 2019, 16.5% of seniors in Texas faced the threat of hunger in the past 12 months.

[FeedingAmerica.org](http://FeedingAmerica.org)  
[AmericasHealthRanking.org](http://AmericasHealthRanking.org)

**A**fter a lifetime of hard work, no elderly should ever have to choose between purchasing prescription medicine and buying groceries. Home-delivered meals are critical to the health and well-being of fellow Texans who would otherwise go hungry or lose their independence without these meals. By providing nutritious meals to elderly residents in the comfort of their own homes, they are able to maintain their independence

The Texas Legislature created a program at TDA that would provide grant awards to home-delivered meal providers to help supplement and expand their existing meal services. This year, TDA has awarded another \$9.3 million in grants to 138

organizations that served a total of more than 13.5 million meals statewide during 2019. 🇹🇽

For more information about Home Delivered Meals grants, [visit our website.](#)



# IT'S RODEO SEASON Y'ALL

**D**rop your Wranglers off at the dry cleaners (heavy starch, please) and polish those boots 'till they shine because rodeo season is in full swing, y'all.

Each year, students across Texas primp and prep livestock for competition; music lovers gather to hear favorite performing artists; and cowboys and cowgirls flock to the arenas to watch one of Texas' favorite sports: rodeo. You'll also find vendors and booths selling everything from spices to boots.

TDA strives to display GO TEXAN products and producers



everywhere. You can find a GO TEXAN space at any one of these six Texas rodeos. Sample, sip and buy quality Texan-made products from our GO TEXAN members. Remember, when you buy GO TEXAN, you're supporting fellow Texans and fueling the state's economy! 🇹🇽

## SCHEDULE

**Jan. 17 – Feb. 8**

GO TEXAN Market at Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo

**Jan. 15 – Feb. 16**

San Angelo Stock Show & Rodeo

**Feb. 6 - Feb. 23**

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo

**March 3 – March 22**

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo

**March 12 – March 22**

Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show & Rodeo

**March 14 – March 28**

Rodeo Austin

# PRODUCE SAFETY

**T**he Texas Office of Produce Safety will be giving a South Texas Produce Safety Update at the TexaSweets building (TIPA HQ) in Mission, Texas on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This event will be open to ALL Texas growers and grower associations. The format

will be an update on compliance assessments, outreach, ag water and all aspects of the Produce Safety Rule. This will be an open forum and it is your opportunity to ask TDA and FDA any questions regarding the rule.

For more information visit [www.TexasAgriculture.gov/TOPS](http://www.TexasAgriculture.gov/TOPS). 🇹🇽

*To register for this free event, [click here](#).*

*[Map the location of this meeting.](#)*





## TDA HOSTS BI-ANNUAL *Quilt Competition*

**S**omewhere Between Heaven and Earth Lies a Texas Sunset". Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller is asking quilters from across the Lone Star State to participate in TDA 2020 Quilt Block Competition.

Quilters are asked to submit patterns depicting scenes that illustrate Texas sunsets. Participating quilters will create patterns from a selection of natural fibers provided by TDA

and up to three additional cotton fabrics provided by the participant. TDA wants quilters to include one special piece of cotton fabric that personally represents family, history or heritage.

Entries for the 2020 Quilt Block Competition are due June 30, 2020. TDA will start accepting applications and mailing the fabric packets in February. To receive information when this opportunity becomes available, please contact Emily Miller.

All entries will be judged by a panel of independent, outside individuals who will select the winning blocks to be pieced together into a quilt. It will be unveiled at the Family Land Heritage ceremony at the State Capitol in Austin this fall. 🇺🇸

**Emily Miller**  
(512) 463-7425  
[Emily.Miller@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Emily.Miller@TexasAgriculture.gov)

## Honorary Texas Wine Ambassador

**T**DA has announced it's first Honorary Texas Wine Ambassador, Jason Hisaw. As Mr. Hisaw travels the state and visits with local restaurants, he will award certificates,

signed by Commissioner Miller, to restaurants whose wine list includes five or more Texas wines. TDA wants to congratulate restaurants who support local wineries and

grape growers and inspire other restaurants to do the same, by adding more Texas wines options in their establishment. 🇺🇸





# STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM: *Applications Open!*

**T**DA is accepting applications for the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) which boosts the value of exported goods and services. The STEP program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The export stipend program will be used to reimburse Eligible Small Business Concerns (ESBC) for specific export-related expenses up to \$10,000. ESBC are required to provide a 25 percent company cash match in conjunction with the stipend. Stipend awards will be based on: funds available, the number of applications submitted, and the strength and completeness of the applications. Applications may be denied if they are late, weak or incomplete. The stipend will vary based on the amount of assistance received.

ESBC must be either new to export or market expansion— that is, the event or activity must help to enter a new market or segment, where they don't already have significant export sales. TDA will have at least two rounds of funding under the 2020 STEP Program.

**All applications received by the initial program**

**deadline of 5 p.m.** Feb. 14, 2020, will be considered for funding. TDA will track the time and date of receipt of all applications and they will be reviewed in the order received.

Applicants not approved for funding will be notified and are eligible to resubmit during future rounds, pending funding availability. Any applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

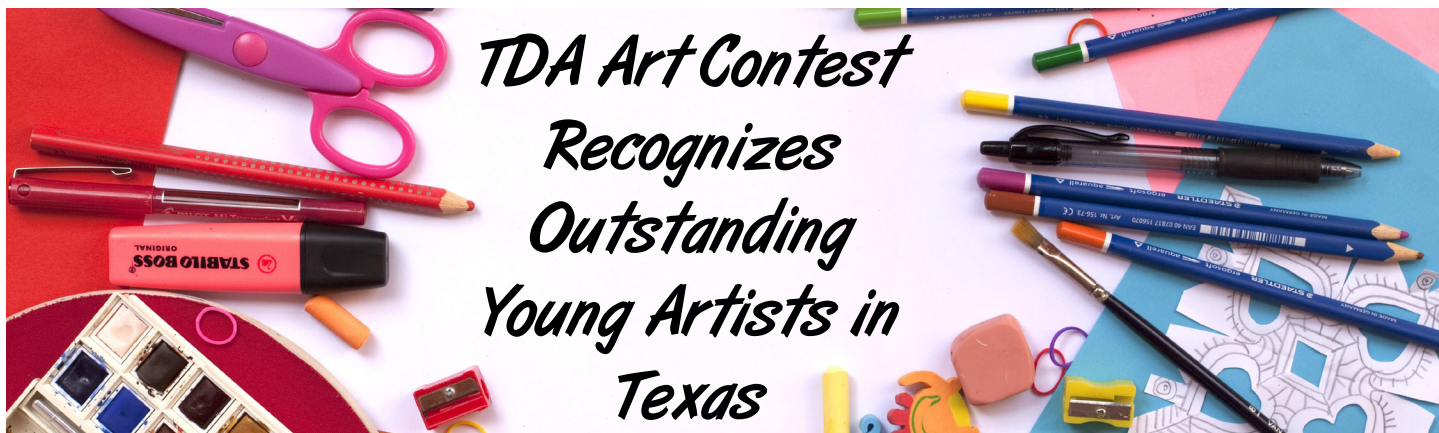
**TDA will start accepting the second round of** applications on May 1. The deadline for round two is 5 p.m. June 15. TDA will track the time and date of all applications. All applications received by the program deadline will be considered for funding in the order received.

Funding is not guaranteed and demand is anticipated to be higher than available grant resources. TDA encourages you to thoroughly review the application and guidelines and submit a complete application prior to the deadlines. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Click [here](#) to download the application materials from the STEP website. For additional details contact TDA's grants office at [Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov) 







## *TDA Art Contest Recognizes Outstanding Young Artists in Texas*

**T**DA invites all the school-age artists in Texas to enter the Food and Nutrition Division's You Art What You Eat art contest. Students in grades K-12 can earn statewide recognition by illustrating these out-of-this-world themes — Blast Off with a Healthy School Lunch and Blast Off with a Healthy School Breakfast. TDA will select two winners in grades K-5 and two in grades

6-12. The winning artwork will feature good nutrition and inspire designs for materials that schools across Texas will use to promote healthy school meals. The deadline for entries is Friday, April 3, 2020.

For contest rules and guidelines, visit [www.SquareMeals.org/ArtContest](http://www.SquareMeals.org/ArtContest). 🇺🇸



## **Texas Nutrition Program Operators to Meet in Austin for MegaCon 2020**

welcome program operators from six federal nutrition programs to Austin May 11-15, 2020, for education, motivation and much more. MegaCon combines TDA conferences for school nutrition programs, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program; and for the first time, the Commodity Supplemental Food Service Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program will

have their own programming at a TDA Food and Nutrition conference. Throughout the week, nutrition program experts will provide updates on new regulations and procedures, outline best practices, and celebrate the importance of meal programs.

For more information, visit [www.SquareMeals.org/MegaCon](http://www.SquareMeals.org/MegaCon). 🇺🇸



**R**egistration is now open for MegaCon 2020, TDA Food and Nutrition's newest and largest conference. TDA will

## Did You Know?

**TDA partners** serve more than 1 billion healthy meals at nearly 28,000 sites and utilize more than \$2 billion in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding.

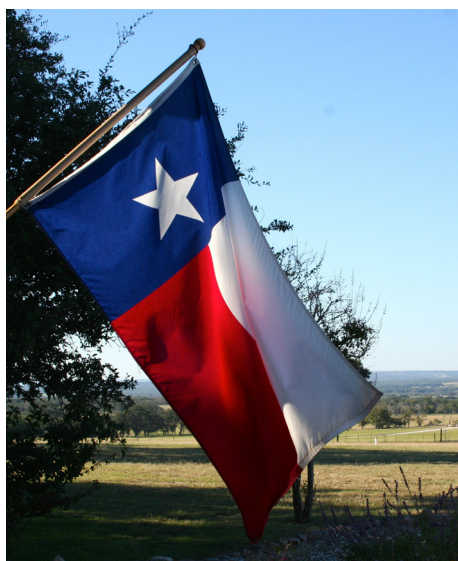
**TDA inspects eggs** for cracks in shells and interior quality to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

**TDA-Certified farmers markets** have a \$30 million impact on the Texas economy.

**TDA inspectors climb grain** silos as high as 150 feet tall in order to measure the amount of stored grain.

**TDA processes circus animals** through the Laredo export facility.

**TDA performs calibrations** on lottery balls used in drawings by the Texas Lottery.



## Texas Ag Stats:

- ☆ Of 408,506 producers in Texas 37% are women
- ☆ The average age of young producers (age 35 or less) was 29 and accounted for 21,304 farms.
- ☆ The number of female producers increased 69% in Texas compared to 2012.
- ☆ The average farm size owned by a young producer in Texas is 385 acres.
- ☆ The category of Asian farmers in Texas increased significantly compared to 2012.
- ☆ Although cattle farms (beef farms specifically) dominated in numbers in Texas, farms with poultry inventory showed the largest increase since 2012.

# Recipe of the Month

## Lone Star Casserole

### Ingredients

2 pounds round steak, cubed  
2 tbsp olive oil  
3 strips thick-cut bacon, diced  
2 carrots, sliced  
1 large onion, chopped  
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery  
10–12 cremini mushrooms, stemmed and sliced  
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh (or 1 1/2 teaspoons dried) rosemary or thyme  
2 tablespoons flour  
1 cup sour cream  
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Season the steak with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot and shimmering, add the steak and bacon and cook, stirring, until browned, about 7–9 minutes. Transfer the meat to a plate and set aside.
3. Add the carrots, onion, celery, mushrooms, garlic and fresh herbs to the skillet and cook, stirring, until softened and golden. Return the meat to the skillet (and any juices), sprinkle with flour and stir until the ingredients are coated.



[Texas Co-Op Power](#)

Add the remaining ingredients, stir to combine and then pour into a buttered 9-by-13-inch casserole. Bake about 1 1/2 hours, until the meat is tender. Serve warm, with noodles, rice or crusty bread.

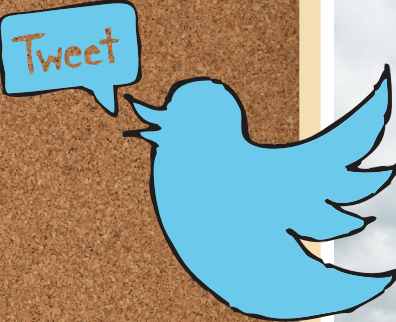


# Your Thoughts...

on Houston's new Vegan BBQ truck.



HOUSTON.EATER.COM  
Houston's New Vegan Barbecue Truck Starts Slinging Smoky Meatless Eats



**Stuart Nash** No thank you. This is Texas and we eat the real thing. If I want vegetables I eat them with dinner next to a juicy steak.  
Like · Reply · Message · 17h

**Jose Angel Hernandez Carrillo** Instead of criticizing it why not amplify your perspective, especially since the meat alternative is made with agricultural products!  
Like · Reply · Message · 17h

**Mike Kelson** Veggie brisket in Texas? No way sports fans, we are number one in the United States for brisket Texas.  
Like · Reply · Message · 17h

**Sandra Haseloff** Give me the Beef  
Like · Reply · Message · 17h

**Steven Crawford** Vegan Barbecue = oxymoron  
Like · Reply · Message · 14h



FEBRUARY 2020

## Tell Us...

what is your favorite part about rodeo and stock show season?



@TexasDepartmentofAgriculture



@TexasDeptofAg



@TexasAgriculture

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