



**Cut Your Own Christmas Trees** It's that time of year again, are you cutting your own Christmas tree? Check out these places!



**Texas Agriculturalist** Rafter M Ranch of Hico, Texas is dedicated to preserving the Texas Longhorn and supporting youth in ag.



**TDA Updates** Harvest of the Month, GO TEXAN events, Texas invasive species, and more!



# TEXAS AGRICULTURE Matters!

Your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Volume 2  
Issue 11  
November 2021



## Howdy Neighbors!

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

2021 is coming to a close soon but there are plenty of GO TEXAN events to attend and ways to support Texans this holiday season. Take a look at our event schedule and be on the lookout for our upcoming GO TEXAN Holiday Gift Guide.

You can also partner with us this season to give back to our food banks, cut your own Texas Christmas tree, and read about a ranch right here in the Lone Star State, dedicated to preserving our iconic Longhorn and supporting our youth in agriculture.

Remember friends,  
Texas Agriculture Matters!

## A Short History of Texas Sugar Cane

The Texas sugar cane industry dates back almost two centuries. The rise and fall of this commodity ultimately led to a large amount being produced on a small amount of Texas land. Now, that's pretty sweet.

**G**rowing sugar cane in Texas dates back at least two centuries, and today is grown by producers throughout the Rio Grande Valley who produce 1.5 million tons of sugar cane each year. Surprisingly, sugar producers work on 40,000 acres within three counties, and of that gross tonnage produced, the mill processes over 160,000 tons of raw sugar and 60,000 tons of blackstrap molasses. This sweet commodity also employs over 450 Texans (full time and seasonal) during the harvest period of October through April.

But growing sugar cane hasn't always been a spoon-full of sugar for Texans and southern states. Introduced in the 1820s, sugar cane appealed to countless planters across the south and through planning, Texas sugar growers eliminated the obstacles of

markets and transportation. By the 1850s, sugar was a well-established commodity and staple in Texas. It wasn't long until the sugar industry became nearly obsolete during the Civil War, preventing profitable marketing and emancipation which produced a serious shortage of labor. Despite low yields and lacking profits, the industry managed to survive postwar period.

Following the war, sugar plantations were incorporated into large business establishments, convicts replaced previous laborers, and renewed interest in sugar cane breathed life back into the industry. During the 1880s, Texas became one of the largest producers of cane but despite its peak, the sugar industry still fell short in parts of capital and labor, but ultimately the unpredictable weather of Texas.

Texas is known for her drastic weather changes – the droughts, frosts, rains, and storms continued to reduce and destroy the cane crops of





though not indicative of any lack of determination on the part of Texas cane producers but rather insurmountable difficulties.

In the 1960s, nearly 40 years after production ended, agricultural leaders partnered with the USDA and launched studies to ascertain the efficiency of cost to produce sugar cane once again. The data produced was solid, confirming that it was the right time to re-enter the sugar market. After a four-decade hiatus, the sugar cane industry in the Rio Grande Valley was reborn. By 1970, the goal of grassroots efforts was to keep costs low but produce maximum profit for growers. A cooperative of 100 growers and farmers in South Texas committed both money and acreage to build a new mill and establish new cane. The mill was completed in 1973, just in time for the first harvest in December of that year.

Twentieth century. Specifically, the frosts and summer storms of 1899 and 1900 resulted in a 60 percent loss in yield in Texas. The following years of the new century did not allow favorable growing conditions, and extreme wet weather resulted in rotted cane and other considerable damage. Extreme freezes, waning interest in growing and production, and labor

challenges eventually lead Texans to cease sugar production by 1926.

For almost a century, sugar culture captured the imagination of countless Texas producers, and represented the efforts of hopeful planters to establish an industry responsive to the needs of Texans and be economically beneficial to the coastal area. These efforts,

The Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers (RGVSG), Inc. is a member-owned cooperative comprised of over 126 growers in a three-county area. RGVSG is one of the top 10 producers of raw sugar in the United States. According to the RGVSG, they account for up to 11 percent of

TEXAS AGRICULTURE *Matters!*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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

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(800) TELL-TDA




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## 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 18 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 total gross revenues produced by Valley agriculture every year. They work closely with Texas A&M University and the USDA to consistently improve the efficiency of sugar growing and production. As a result of these collaborations, average acre of sugar cane today yields 100 pounds of raw sugar more than the same acre did in 1990.

Want to know more about Texas sugar cane? Visit [RGVSugar.com](http://RGVSugar.com) and be sure to watch future episodes of Texas Agriculture Matters with Commissioner Sid Miller on RFD-TV. 🇺🇸



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## 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.



# TEXAS AGRICULTURALIST

*Rafter M Ranch*  
Hico, Texas



**R**after M Ranch is a third-generation, family-owned ranch in Hico, Texas, breeding and raising world champion pedigree Texas Longhorns and more importantly, supporting and recognizing one of the most crucial foundations

of agriculture – our youth. “Our ranch is a huge youth supporter,” says Cori McCoy, “we help kids locate show calves even if they don’t buy from us.

We train them, haul cattle to shows, teach them about correct conformation, structure, productivity, showmanship, and so much more. Our youth are the future of the Texas Longhorn breed.” In addition to encouraging and assisting kids involved in show ring, Rafter M Ranch hosts their own show at Circle T Arena in Hamilton

each March, where they’ve paid out over \$15,000 in cash scholarships, cash premiums, and awards.

The McCoy’s have been living on and working the ranch since 1964, working hard as a family to clear the land, make it productive and beautiful, to continue using the resources it provides to sustain their cattle and replenish the land. In the mid-2000s when the drought hit Texas, it wasn’t feasible for the family to continue raising Beef Masters and transitioned to registered Longhorns.



“Longhorns thrive on other vegetation and forage when grazing is scarce in drought conditions,” notes Cori, “Since the transition, our ranch has made a highly competing production herd with world champion genetics.”

As a cattle rancher, Cori says the low sale barn prices for beef cattle are the biggest challenge right now. Longhorns are even more reduced in price because cattle are instantly docked for having large horns or not being solid black. The McCoy’s have adapted to this challenge by training potential show calves and sell them to exhibitors on the show circuit across the United States. “Some are sold as pasture pets because even people that don’t raise Longhorns want a few trophy steers because these iconic cattle are beautiful, eye catching, good natured, and just fun to see out in your pasture,” says Cori. Steers that don’t make the “cut” are processed for their lean, tender beef. The biggest reward? The memories made as a family and teaching each generation the importance of family and agriculture.



## WHAT DOES THE TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE AT RAFTER M RANCH?



A typical day consists of checking the herd and recording any new calves or breeding, rotating pastures for the herd or putting out hay depending on the season, putting out protein tubs, checking fence lines, cleaning the show barns and training the show calves, hauling feed, clearing pastures, prepping the hay field, cutting fire wood, contacting clients about delivery of their cattle purchase, social media promotions, and so much more. Every day is different from the last as there is always a busted pipe to fix, an animal to doctor, a tractor

to fix, and any other repair that might pop up.



## WHAT IS ONE THING YOU’D LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT PRODUCING LONGHORNS?



One thing we would love people to know about producing Longhorns is that it is very rewarding in so many ways. Preserving these iconic cattle is a pleasure. They are very calm and we call the gentle giants. Each one is unique in its color, color patterns, and personalities. They are very intelligent and easy to work with.



## HOW ARE YOUR CATTLE FED/ FINISHED?



Texas Longhorns diet in the production herd is pasture grazing and protein tubs. Coastal hay in the winter or

as needed depending on pasture conditions. The show calves are given coastal hay and a 12% protein show feed. Our meat steers are grass raised then finished with a good quality feed 30 days before processing.



## WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR LEGACY?



The family inspires us to continue the Rafter M Ranch legacy. We all live and work the ranch together, we plan each breeding and pairing together, work side by side whether it hauling hay up from the field, stretching fence, or working the herd. We want to keep this ranch in the family for many generations to come. The memories made together are priceless. 🇹🇽

*Click the arrows to view images of Rafter M Ranch*

## HOW TO FIND US

Follow Rafter M Ranch on Facebook @RafterMRanchHicoTexasEst1964 and TikTok @raftermranch1964



# JOHNSON'S BACKYARD GARDEN

## FARM PROFILE

This month's featured farm is Johnson's Backyard Garden, located in Austin, the capital city of the Lone Star State. The name Johnson's Backyard Garden (JBG) says a lot. In 2004, the Johnson family turned their backyard in an Austin neighborhood into a working garden and started selling their fruits and vegetables at a local farmers market.

In 2006, JBG started their CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) Program and began providing vegetables to about 30 Austin families every week. The farm soon took over the front and side yards, too, leaving the Johnson children with little room to play.

Later that year, JBG bought 20 acres of land five miles away from downtown Austin — giving the kids more room to play and the farm more room to grow. Today, JBG has gone from being a backyard garden to being a modern farm operating on about 200 acres, and delivering vegetables all over Central Texas. They also foster a community of pollinators such as bees and butterflies that help make sure all of the plants stay happy and healthy and they are able to grow the best tasting produce possible on their Central Texas soil.

Farmer Brenton Johnson and farm dog Roxie



## + STATS

**Owner:** Brenton Johnson

**Founded:** 2004

**Location:** Cedar Creek, Texas

**Specialty:** Organic produce



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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

This product was funded by USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.







Photo courtesy of USDA, APHIS

## Emerald Ash Borer Beetle: The Ash Tree Killer

**T**he emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is a destructive wood-boring pest of ash trees (*Fraxinus spp.*). Native to China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Russian Far East, the emerald ash borer beetle (EAB) was unknown in North America until its discovery in southeast Michigan in 2002. Today, EAB infestations have been detected in 35 states including Texas. APHIS works with State cooperators to detect, control and prevent the human-assisted spread of the pest in order to safeguard America's ash trees.

Eggs are laid between layers of bark and in bark crevices. Larvae hatch in about one week and bore into the tree where they feed on the inner bark and phloem, creating "S"-shaped galleries. Larvae go through four feeding stages, and then excavate a pupal chamber in the fall, where they will overwinter as prepupae.

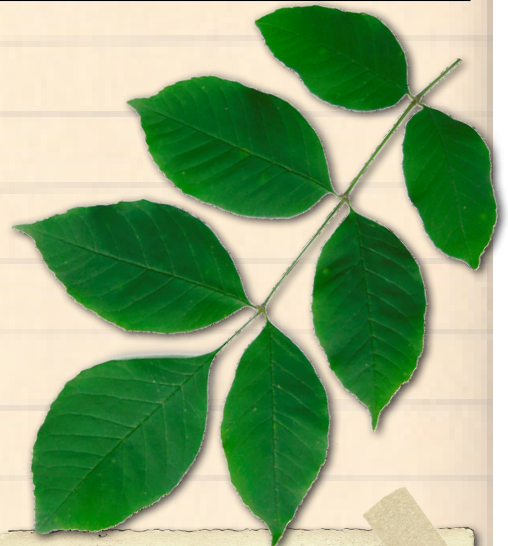
Pupation occurs in late spring, and adults begin to emerge through "D"-shaped exit holes in May and early

June. Adults will remain active until the end of summer.

New infestations are difficult to detect, as damage to the tree may not be apparent for up to three years. Symptoms of an infestation can include branch dieback in the upper crown, excessive epicormic branching on the tree trunk, and vertical bark splits. Woodpecker damage is sometimes apparent.

To prevent EAB from spreading, do not transport firewood from the forest to your home. It is recommended to buy firewood from certified local sources. Exotic pests like the Emerald Ash Borer can be spread when infested firewood is transported to new areas.

If you suspect EAB activity or infested firewood please contact the TDA Plant Quality Office by emailing [PlantQuality@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:PlantQuality@TexasAgriculture.gov) or calling (512) 463-7660. 🇺🇸



Credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)





Image courtesy of The Houston Food Bank

## Join TDA in Supporting Texas Food Banks

**M**ore than 4 million Texans are food insecure, meaning they have limited or uncertain access to adequate food. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) connects many of them with health and hope through thousands of partners who provide boxes of food in their hands, school meals on a cafeteria tray or fresh fruit in a day care snack. Without partners such as schools, food banks and day care providers, the TDA Food and Nutrition Division could not fulfill its mission of “Feeding the Hungry and Promoting Healthy Lifestyles.”

This year food banks helped TDA connect Texans with food valued at more than \$110 million through the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). TDA oversight of three federal COVID-19 stimulus programs in Texas made another \$69 million in food purchased by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) available for distribution by food banks. During times of emergency, TDA support includes

ensuring food banks have the USDA program waivers needed to make operational changes while continuing to follow federal regulations.

More than most TDA partners, food banks also rely on community support to tackle the challenges of food insecurity in Texas. Many food banks offer nutrition education and counseling to help the people they serve get back on their feet. They serve large segments of Texans in their communities, and they can only reach them with the help of generous community members ready to provide food, time or money.

TDA encourages everyone to find the nearest food bank and explore ways to assist. It starts with typing in a ZIP code at [FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.feedingamerica.org). Food banks can leverage any dollar donated to provide several meals and volunteering may include food sorting, distributing food at food pantries or working in a kitchen.

Food banks have implemented health and safety protocols for volunteers in response to COVID-19.

This month and next, most food banks across Texas will host seasonal events like raffles, fun runs, auctions and more to increase donations and involvement so more Texans in need have good nutrition for holiday celebrations. Find your food bank and see if there is an event you can participate in and help make someone’s holiday season a little brighter. 🇹🇽



Image courtesy of The Houston Food Bank



## Want to Catch Up on Texas Agriculture Matters?



**T**exas Agriculture Matters, hosted by Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, is a new weekly show on RFD-TV that seeks to answer the question, “Why Does Texas Agriculture Matter?”

From cattle to cotton, from rodeos to rockets, Texas Agriculture Matters is a fun, informative look at the role of agriculture in our daily lives. The show utilizes the trademark wit and wisdom of its host Commissioner Sid Miller — an 8th generation farmer and rancher and 18-time world champion rodeo cowboy — to explore a new Texas agriculture-

related topic every week. Kicking off every show with his trademark catchphrase “Howdy Neighbors” Miller tackles such varied topics as hemp, horses, cattle genetics, and international trade.

Through feature segments, one-on-one interviews and eye-catching infographics, the show delivers equal doses of ag policy, local products, western heritage and rural lifestyle. Every Tuesday at 6pm CST, tune in to RFD-TV and join Commissioner Sid Miller as he takes you on a weekly look into why Texas Agriculture Matters! 🇺🇸

You can catch up on Texas Agriculture Matters episodes on [TexasAgriculture.gov](http://TexasAgriculture.gov). New episodes air on Tuesdays in November at 6pm CST on RFD-TV!

### **UPCOMING:**

**November 2**  
Texas Rice

**November 5**  
Exporting Livestock Through Texas

**November 9**  
Agricultural Recovery

### TEXAS AGRICULTURE MATTERS EPISODE LIST

SEASON 1	SEASON 2	SEASON 3	SEASON 4
1. Texas Agriculture Matters (4/21/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	1. Equine Empire (8/11/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	1. Pumpkins (1/12/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	1. Texas Wine (6/1/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
2. Bringing Farm to School (4/28/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	2. Future Farmers (8/18/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	2. Welding Values (1/19/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	2. Veteran Farmers (6/8/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
3. Greatest Show on Dirt (4/28/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	3. Texas Forests (8/25/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	3. Science of Meat (1/26/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	3. Show Pigs (6/15/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
4. Taking Texas Worldwide (5/12/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	4. Milk (9/1/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	4. Young Farmers (2/2/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	4. Painted Desert Sheep (6/22/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
5. Cotton is King (5/19/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	5. Citrus (9/8/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	5. Aloe Vera (2/9/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	5. Strawberries (6/29/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
6. Future of Ag (5/26/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	6. State Fair (9/15/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	6. Texas Longhorns (2/16/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	6. Food Banks (7/6/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
7. Building Better Beef (6/2/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	7. King of Ranches (9/22/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>	7. Honey Bees (2/23/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	7. Paint Horses (7/13/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>
8. Industrial Hemp (6/9/20) <a href="#">Watch</a>		8. RGV Horse Patrol (3/2/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>	8. Texas Roses (7/20/21) <a href="#">Watch</a>



# TEXAS PECANS



## DID YOU KNOW?



Texas is a top three pecan producing state.



The pecan is the official state tree, nut and pie of Texas.



Pecans are loaded with healthy antioxidants.



GO TEXAN.®



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE





AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER





# CARROTS

HARVEST OF THE MONTH  
NOVEMBER



**Carrots** are a root vegetable like potatoes, turnips and beets. Root vegetables are the edible roots of plants that grow underneath the ground. Above ground, they have ferny, green leaves. Carrots are often used for cooking and they have a lot of vitamin A. You can chop carrots for soups and stews, eat them raw in salads or with a dip, shred them for carrot cake and other desserts, or even blend them for a yummy juice.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Carrots were one of the earliest vegetables grown by man. The first carrots were grown about 5,000 years ago in the Middle East.

## FUN FACT

Carrots started out white or purple in color. The first orange carrots were grown in the Netherlands because orange was the official color of the royal family.



CARROT GROWING REGIONS

- 1. The High Plains
- 2. Winter Garden

# CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS

CEDAR PINE SPRUCE FIR

CUT YOUR OWN

## [Kelumac Christmas Tree Farm Bed & Breakfast](#) *Bryan, Texas - (979) 279-3931*

A 22 acre Christmas Tree Farm with Farm Stay accommodations. A working Christmas Tree Farm, this 22 acre farm has been growing Christmas Trees since 1988 when they planted their first 1,000 trees and have replanted 300-500 trees each year since that time. Kelumac is open Wednesday before Thanksgiving 10am - 5:30pm, the day after Thanksgiving 10am - 5:30pm. On weekends Kelumac is open Saturday through Sunday: 10am - 5:30pm, and weekdays Wednesday through Friday 10am - 5:30pm. The last day for tree sales is December 21, or when trees sell out. Saws, measuring poles, and wagons are provided. Come early!

## [Old Time Christmas Tree Farm](#) *Spring, Texas - (281) 370-9141*

The farm has been family owned and operated since 1996. The farm has over 40 acres planted in trees and has thousands of Virginia Pines to choose from along with Cypress trees.

## [Spring Creek Growers](#) *Magnolia, Texas - (281) 259-8114*

Third and fourth generations of the Michel family to operate this farm located in southwestern Montgomery County near Spring Creek. Today, they grow and harvest approximately 20 acres of Virginia Pine and Leyland Cypress trees for the Christmas season.





**COMING SOON!**  
November 8, 2021

HOWDY



HOLIDAYS



GO TEXAN.®

*Holiday Gift Guide 2021*

# GO TEXAN EVENTS

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Shrimp Cook-Off and Seafood Festival</u></b> |
| <b>6</b>    | <i>Port Isabel</i>                                 |
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Burleson Texas Bistro Wine &amp; Brew Crawl</u></b> |
| <b>6</b>    | <i>Burleson</i>   |
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Big Top Vintage Club Market</u></b> |
| <b>6-7</b>  | <i>Conroe</i>                             |
- |             |                               |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>2021 Grape Camp</u></b> |
| <b>8-9</b>  | <i>New Braunfels</i>          |
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Fall Fest &amp; Market Days</u></b> |
| <b>13</b>   | <i>Elgin</i>                              |
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Reds, Wheat, and Blues Festival</u></b> |
| <b>13</b>   | <i>Navasota</i>                               |
- |             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Wild West Wine Walk</u></b> |
| <b>13</b>   | <i>McKinney</i>                   |
- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b>  | <b><u>Big Top Vintage Club Market</u></b> |
| <b>13-14</b> | <i>Richmond</i>                           |
- |              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Nov.</b>  | <b><u>Dorper Days</u></b> |
| <b>19-20</b> | <i>Snyder</i>             |
- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Nov.</b>  | <b><u>Cross Timbers Wine Trail Symposium</u></b> |
| <b>19-20</b> | <i>Aledo</i>                                     |

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b>  | <b><u>Big Top Vintage Club Market</u></b> |
| <b>20-21</b> | <i>Waco</i>                               |

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Drink North Texas Wine &amp; Music Festival</u></b> |
| <b>27</b>   | <i>McKinney</i>   |

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>Nov.</b> | <b><u>Chamber Chilifest &amp; Classic Car Show</u></b> |
| <b>31</b>   | <i>Jacksboro</i>                                       |



## FOR MORE INFO

For more information on GO TEXAN event grant winners and remaining events for 2021, please visit the Experience GO TEXAN Events [website](#).





**GO TEXAN.**<sup>®</sup>

**FIND THE MARK**  
*that matters*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

## WHAT

**does it mean?**

When you see the mark, you know the product or place has been proudly certified as authentically Texan.

## WHERE

**do you find it?**

Look for the mark anywhere you shop, from local farmer's markets to national retail chains.

**Support Texas.**

Want to learn more?  
[gotexan.org](http://gotexan.org)

**#GOTEXAN**





# Fresh From the Field



## NEW MEMBERS!

- ★ [4RWellness, LLC](#)
- ★ [Greenhouse Foods, LLC](#)
- ★ [Boba Vida](#)
- ★ [PSC Motorsports](#)
- ★ [3rd Coast Facility](#)
- ★ [Dirty Hands Candles](#)
- ★ [Lavender Ridge Farms](#)
- ★ [Chuckwagon Nutcakes](#)
- ★ [Sapi Technologies](#)
- ★ [Whitehurt Farm](#)
- ★ [Jay Bird Produce](#)
- ★ [HH Growers LP](#)
- ★ [Majek Vineyard and Winery](#)
- ★ [Finch BBQ, LLC](#)
- ★ [Mato Tomato Girls, LLC](#)
- ★ [MixerElixir, LLC](#)
- ★ [Harlingen Farmers Market](#)
- ★ [Van Roehling](#)
- ★ [Millican Pecan Company](#)
- ★ [Rolen's Honey House](#)
- ★ [The Cooks Nook](#)
- ★ [Hobby Garden](#)
- ★ [Barry Shlachter](#)
- ★ [East Texas Crafters](#)
- ★ [Back 4T Farms](#)
- ★ [Boarri Craft Butchery](#)
- ★ [GSC Chipotle Texas, LTD](#)

**A**griculture Commissioner Sid Miller's online effort to connect consumers with local agriculture producers selling directly to the public is still going strong. The "Direct from Texas" Facebook page has grown to over 5 thousand members.

The group, aimed at Texas producers selling items like beef, pecans, honey, vegetables, fruit and more directly to the public continues to be successful. The group provides a forum for these businesses and consumers to interact and do business. Selling direct to the public allows Texas growers and producers to avoid delays in distribution chains while continuing to make money until restaurants, cruise ships, hotels and other businesses fully reopen.

"This is like agriculture used to be," Miller said. "A farmer or rancher has a great product and they sell it directly to their neighbor. Today, that neighbor can be around the corner or across the globe. 'Direct from Texas' provides our ag producers another avenue to reach customers until Texas finally reopens. And consumers get fresh, Texas-made products. That's what I call a Texas "twofer" – everybody wins."

COVID-19 continues to impact rural communities around the state, the rising challenges of beef prices, and stability of shipping and exporting. However, the ability for Texas farmers and ranchers to sell directly to the consumers proves the food supply remains strong despite interruptions in processing, packaging or distribution.

To see the "Direct from Texas" business listing, click [here](#).

To join the Facebook Group, visit <http://www.facebook.com/groups/directfromtexas> and request to join.

There is no cost to appear on the web listing or join the Facebook Group. This is provided by the Texas Department of Agriculture as a public service in support of Texas businesses. 🇹🇽





## Did You Know?

**TDA protects consumers** by displaying consumer information stickers on scales and measuring devices throughout Texas to inform consumers how to contact TDA, and the requirements for businesses to post each device's registration certificate in the view of the public.

**TDA inspects** trees for diseases and pests. Other forestry issues are handled by the Texas A&M Forestry Service.

**TDA operates** livestock export pens. The agency has no official role in animal health, as that's the responsibility of the Texas Animal Health Commission.

**TDA operates** road station inspections and utilizes DPS to stop commercial vehicles for inspection of agricultural plant products entering the state.

## Texas Ag Stats:

- ★ There are 247,000 farming operations in Texas.
- ★ The Texas citrus industry, oranges specifically, brought in \$35,538,000 to the economy.
- ★ Over 4 million acres of cotton were harvested in Texas in 2017.
- ★ The average size of a farm in Texas is 511 acres.
- ★ The average farmer in Texas is 59 years old.

## Recipe of the Month

### Air Fry Wings

#### Nature Nate's Honey

##### Ingredients

3 pounds chicken wings  
2 teaspoons melted butter  
2 tblsp Nature Nate's Raw & Unfiltered Honey  
4 tblsp all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons smoked paprika  
2 teaspoons garlic powder  
2 teaspoons salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

##### Honey Ranch

1 cup plain Greek yogurt  
1 ounce packet ranch style dressing mix  
1/2 cup buttermilk  
1/4 cup Nature Nate's Raw & Unfiltered Honey

##### Directions

1. Preheat air fryer to 400°F.
2. Rinse and pat dry chicken wings. In a large bowl, toss the wings in the honey and butter until coated.
3. Sift together remaining ingredients. Coat the wings evenly with the flour and spice mixture.
4. Place half of the wings in the air fryer basket and cook for 8-10 minutes.
5. Turn wings and cook another 8-10 minutes. Repeat with remaining wings.



# Your thoughts on...

National Farmers Day...

## NATIONAL FARMER'S DAY

1 OF EVERY 7 WORKING TEXANS IS IN AN AGRICULTURE- RELATED JOB

#TEXASDEPARTMENTOFAGRICULTURE



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Jan Lee  
A Big THANK YOU to all of our hard-working farmers!

Dawn Wallace  
Breakfast this morning I thank God for creating farmers because I had my dark green leafy things for breakfast yes I ate a salad for breakfast it was quick it was easy thank you farmers

olly Sontag  
God bless the farmers and ranchers of Texas, and any state. They feed us. True Americans.



## Tell Us... are you cutting your own Christmas tree?



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TEXAS AGRICULTURE *Matters!*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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