



**STAR Fund**  
Texas farmers and ranchers impacted by recent wildfires and other natural disasters will benefit from the STAR Fund.  
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**Vintner's Cup**  
Applications for the Vintner's Cup Competition are open! Is your wine the best in Texas? Deadline is July 1.  
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**TDA Updates**  
Gun Safety, Food & Nutrition, Peach Ice Cream Recipe, and more!



# TEXAS AGRICULTURE Matters!

Your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Volume 3  
Issue 6  
June 2022



## Howdy Neighbors!

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

Have you stopped at your local farmers market lately? I can guarantee they've got the freshest meats, breads, eggs, pasteries, and so much more. You'll probably find some freshly picked peaches that would pair perfectly with ice cream.

Go to our website to find a [GO TEXAN farmer's market](#) near you this summer. You'll be supporting your local farmers, fueling the Texas economy, and enjoying the freshest goods.

And, folks, we're still accepting donations and applications for the STAR Fund. Its going to help those affected by the recent tornados and wildfires. Please consider applying or donating today!

Remember friends, Texas Agriculture Matters!

Sid Miller  
Texas Agriculture Commissioner

# TEXAS peaches



It's officially summer in Texas when you can spot a roadside market on a highway or FM road that snakes into, out of, or around the Hill Country. June through August, peach farmers and growers from Fredericksburg to Stonewall can be found selling juicy, delicious peaches and other fresh summer fruits.

Peaches are versatile and can satisfy any sweet tooth – and these roadside stands are known to offer flavorful ice creams, crispy, gooey cobblers, pies, spreads, jams, and more.

When Texans love a good thing, they produce a lot of it. That's why there are over 1 million peach trees



*continued on page 2...*



planted in the Lone Star State, making peaches the leading deciduous fruit crop grown in Texas. Peach production is concentrated in east, central, and central northwest counties, usually on small one acre or less orchards. Texas has plenty of peach destinations but Gillespie, Stonewall, and Parker Counties top the list.

Peach production peaked in 1910 in Texas, with nearly 10 million trees of bearing age were reported. Plant diseases, drought, and freezes subsequently damaged the industry and by 1959, Texas had over 7,000 farms reporting 806,309 peach trees; the following year the number of trees had increased to 1,500,000. Today, there are over 1,000 peach tree farms in Texas that generated \$6,250,000 in fresh market production value in 2017.

While the 2022 peach crop is not as abundant as last year's, there are plenty of peaches to go around, and they're still packed with that authentic Texas flavor. This summer you can visit a pick-your-own peach farm, visit a [roadside stand](#), or make your own [peach ice cream](#), a perfect summer treat. 🍑



## PICKING THE perfect peach

**Look at the color.** The skin color variations depend upon the variety, but for peaches with partially yellow exteriors, the best indication of ripeness is a deep-gold hue on the “shoulders” of the fruit, at the stem end. For varieties with solid red skin, look for a darker hue at the shoulders; white-fleshed peaches will have deep-pink coloration.

A ripe peach **should have a bit of give** when touched (careful; you don't want to bruise it), but you don't want it to be soft unless you're planning to make jam. Peaches don't technically ripen after harvest; that is, they won't continue to develop sugar content. They'll soften up if placed in a paper bag or bowl, but the sweetness depends upon the variety.

**Taste is always the best indicator**, so ask if you can have a sample if there aren't any readily available. If you're picking the fruit yourself, they should give fairly easily on the branch; if you have to tug, they're not ready.

## TYPES OF PEACHES in Texas

Look for these Texas-grown beauties (regional availability varies) at your local farmers market, farm stand, or store:

**BOUNTY:** Sizeable and firm with good texture; use for grilling, poaching, or for applications that require slices.

**FLAMEPRINCE:** Late ripening, extending the Texas freestone season well into August. Sweet and tart medium to large fruit.

**DIXILAND:** This sweet, juicy variety is one of Texas' most beloved. Fresh or preserves.

**LORING:** Tied with Dixiland for the region's favorite, with firm, “melting” flesh. Fresh or with ice cream, please.

**HARVESTER:** Grown throughout Texas; semi-freestone with medium texture and excellent flavor and balance. Fresh, preserves, with ice cream, or for baking and cooking.

**RED GLOBE:** Holds up well for baking and canning.

### TEXAS AGRICULTURE *Matters!*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Produced by the Office of Communications  
Editor, Katlyn Gast

[www.TexasAgriculture.gov](http://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 20 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.



GO TEXAN.®

# GO TEXAN PARTNER

## *Peach Producers & Peach Products*

### *Producers*



**Eckhardt Orchards** - Located in Fredericksberg, Eckhardt Orchard's is open hours from 8am-6pm every day of the week. Come early because they sell out everyday at the start of the season! Follow them on Facebook [@EckhardtOrchards](#) and on Instagram [@eckhardt\\_orchards](#)



**Cooper Peaches** - Cooper Farms started on just 5 acres in Fairfield in 1983 and is one of the most popular peach spots in Texas today. You can find Cooper Farms peaches in Conroe. A stand is set up in the parking lot of the Montgomery Bakehouse (240 Longmire Road, Conroe, Texas 77304) every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 8am-2pm, unless they sell out sooner. Selling locations change, so be sure to follow them on Facebook [@cooperfarmspeaches](#) for the latest updates.



**Lightsey Farms** - Located in Mexia, Lightsey Farms market is open 8am - 5pm daily (2033 FM 1365 Mexia, Texas) and offer blackberries, plums, and peaches. Follow them on Facebook [@Lightsey.Farms.Mexia.TX](#) and Instagram [@lightseyfarms](#)

### *Products*

#### **PEACH HOT SAUCES**

- Spicy Peach Reaper
- Klown's Inferno

#### **PEACH TEAS**

- Texas Select Country Peach Tea
- Peach Sunrise Black Tea
- Sweet Peach Tea

#### **PEACH SOAP**

*A Joy Forever Native Texas Soap Collection,  
Hill Country Peach*

#### **WINES WITH PEACH NOTES**

- Reddy Vineyards 2020 TX-Lush Semi-Sweet White
- Lucky Lass, Peach

#### **PEACH SPREAD**

*Peach Thyme Prosecco*



## 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 and re-elected to a second term in 2018. 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.



# STAR FUND OPEN

FOR 2022 WILDFIRES AND TORNADOES

[APPLY HERE](#) ★ DEADLINE AUGUST 8, 2022

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES  
TEXAS FARMERS AND RANCHERS  
WE ARE THERE



**THE**  
**STAR**  
**FUND**  
STATE OF TEXAS  
AGRICULTURE RELIEF  
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Managed by the Texas Department of Agriculture, the STAR Fund was created to collect private donations from individuals and businesses to help Texas farmers and ranchers affected by natural disasters. It is a helping hand, not a handout. If you or your company would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the STAR Fund, please contact TDA today. Your support is appreciated!

**DONATE NOW**

(800) TELL TDA  
texasagriculture.gov





The 2022 Family Land Heritage application deadline has been extended to June 1, 2022. This extension is intended to allow families additional time to gather the documents necessary to apply.

The Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) Family Land Heritage (FLH) program pays tribute to families who have kept their land in continuous agricultural production for at least 100 years.

Eligible farms and ranches must be owned and operated by the descendants of the original founder, either through blood, marriage or adoption. At least 10 acres of the land must have been in continuous agricultural production for the past 100 years or more.

Visit [www.FamilyLandHeritage.com](http://www.FamilyLandHeritage.com) to learn more or download an application. 🇺🇸

For questions contact Justin Rand at 512-463-9885 or [Justin.Rand@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Justin.Rand@TexasAgriculture.gov)

# IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP

Have you experienced problems like rising costs, market fluctuations, family conflicts, or extreme weather?

Are you stressed or feeling defeated?

Even the toughest people **NEED HELP** sometimes.

**AgriStress**  
HELPLINE<sup>SM</sup>  
for Texas

**833-897-2474**



Scan code to save the number!



The Texas Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the national nonprofit AgriSafe Network and the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education (at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler) designed this comprehensive agricultural crisis helpline for Texans.

# SAFETY SAVES

## *Gun Safety*

Article courtesy of UT Southwest Ag Center.

**G**uns are common in rural America. In fact, almost half of rural residents say they own a gun. Firearms are used for hunting, recreational shooting and for protecting rural workers from wild animals. Many times guns are sources of pride and nostalgia. They are passed down from generation to generation and cherished by their owners the same way someone might cherish a piece of heirloom jewelry.

However, a piece of jewelry is not likely to end a life. Gun owners have to take precautions to ensure that their firearms do not end up in the wrong hands. Shootings are second only to car accidents in the causes of fatal injuries in rural areas. Furthermore, people who own firearms and experience extreme stress need to recognize that they are at high risk for suicide.

According to the CDC, 51% of all suicides are carried out using a firearm. Not only are firearms involved in a high rate of fatal injuries, but they can also



cause non-fatal injuries including hearing and eye damage.

This is not a position article on whether or not people should own guns. Nor is it a political statement

for gun reform. It is simply intended as a reminder for gun owners. If you own a firearm, it is your responsibility to protect your family and community from unintentional or intentional harm. 🇺🇸

## SAFETY TIPS

1. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction-away from people.
2. Unload firearms when not in use. Don't rely on your gun's 'safety.'
3. Clean and maintain guns regularly.
4. Be sure of your target AND what's beyond it.
5. Use the correct ammunition.
6. If the gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care!
7. Always wear eye and ear protection when shooting.
8. Keep firearms in a locked safe.
9. Talk to family members about gun safety.
10. Suicide gravely affects family left behind.

**Call the suicide prevention lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text HOME to 741741 to talk to a trained professional.**

# ARE YOU A TEXAS quilter?

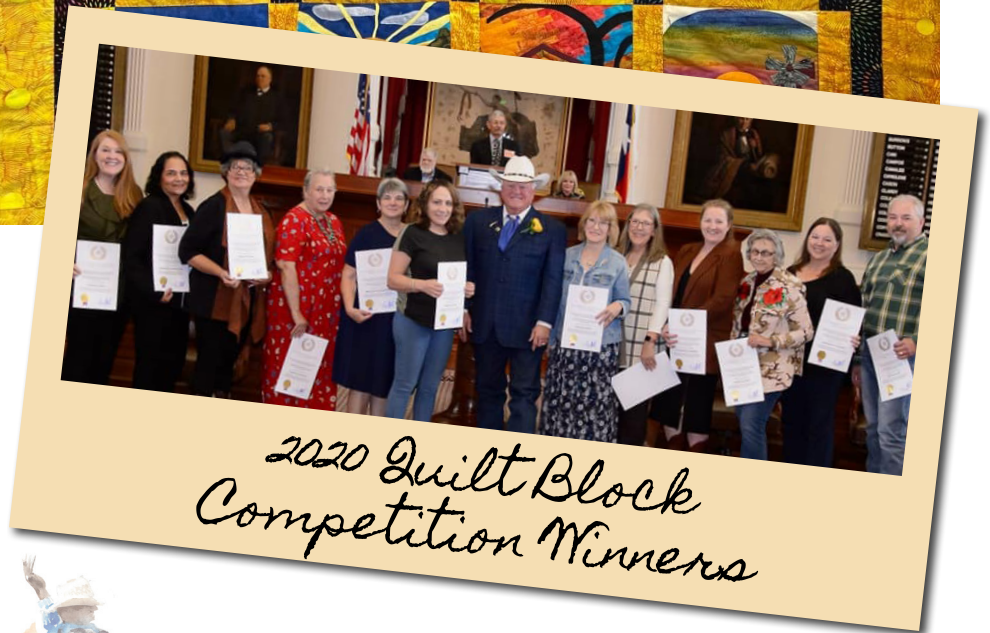
Commissioner Miller is asking quilters from across the Lone Star State to participate in the 2022 Quilt Block Competition. Quilters are asked to submit patterns depicting scenes from Texas Rodeos.

“Each year we host this quilt competition, the submissions continue to amaze me,” Commissioner Miller said. “These folks spend countless hours hand-crafting beautiful quilt blocks showcasing Texas agriculture and just when you think the designs can’t get any better – they do! I look forward to this year’s presentation and the iconic Texas rodeo scenes our talented quilters will create.”

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 asks quilters to include one special piece of cotton fabric that personally represents family, history or heritage.

TDA’s Family Land Heritage program honors Texas families who have kept their land in continuous agricultural operation for 100 years or more. This celebration of Texas agriculture has been taking place since 1974, and Commissioner Miller is excited to bring together two TDA traditions — Family Land Heritage and the Quilt Block Competition — this year.

Entries for the 2022 Quilt Block Competition are due June 30, 2022. TDA is accepting applications now and will mail the fabric packets as soon as an application is processed.



2020 Quilt Block  
Competition Winners



## CONTACT INFO

For more information on applying for the 2022 Quilt Block Competition, please visit our [website](#).

**For questions contact:**  
Anisa Elizondo at 512- 463-7518 or email  
[Anisa.Elizondo@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Anisa.Elizondo@TexasAgriculture.gov)



**Peaches** are stone fruits, which mean they have large pits or seeds in their centers. Peaches are known for their yellow and red fuzzy skins and they're really soft to the touch. Peaches are mostly grown in the central and eastern regions of Texas. The Hill County peach farms located in central Texas are famous for the quality of their fruit. Peaches grow on trees and taste the best from June through the end of August. Peaches are an extremely juicy fruit and taste great fresh or cooked. Use them with yogurt or in a fruit salad.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'peach' has come to mean 'fine' or 'excellent' and is used in many sayings like "everything's peachy" and "life is peachy keen."

### FUN FACT

In China, peaches are symbols of long life and good luck.



PEACH GROWING REGIONS

- 1. East Texas
- 2. Central Texas



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

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







# HEALTHY SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS

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

## SUMMER MEALS HELP CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL READY TO THRIVE

**W**hen many schools and their cafeterias close for summer, Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) partners spring into action to offer another source of good nutrition for young Texans.

Food banks, schools and community organizations join with TDA and offer federally funded Summer Meal Programs to ensure children have the nutrition they need for an active, healthy summer.

In Texas, TDA administers these programs that make meals available at no cost to families for children 18 years

old and younger and people 21 and younger with disabilities.

Families can find meal sites across Texas between June 1 and August 30 by using one of these three tools:

- Dial 211 to speak to a live operator.
- Visit [SummerFood.org](http://SummerFood.org) for an interactive site locator map.
- Text FOOD or COMIDA to 304-304.

In addition to finding a site, it is important for families to use these tools frequently to confirm dates, times, and information about how meals will be served. Families are

encouraged to call, text, or go online, and connect with meal sites throughout the summer to access healthy meals for young Texans.

Last summer, the Summer Meal Programs provided 88 million meals at more than 14,000 sites in Texas. Commissioner Miller and TDA encourage widespread communication about the Summer Meal Programs.

Increasing participation helps Texas families and supports the hard work of local sponsors operating meal sites. For more information, visit [SummerFood.org](http://SummerFood.org).



# 2023 FARM BILL PRIORITIES



The United States Farm Bill, which covers everything from commodity payments to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding, gets renewed every five years. As negotiations for the 2023 Farm Bill begin, agricultural groups have begun offering their opinions on what should be included, removed, continued, and changed.

With the reconciliation package failing to pass last year, House and Senate Ag leadership is in consensus that the bill will have flat funding. This means that the same amount of funding from the 2018 bill will be available to allocate across competing priorities.

According to Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), legislators will have to get “creative” if they want to re-apportion some of that money to climate programs, which Republicans mostly oppose.

Chairman David Scott (D-GA) has also issued a warning that pushing too hard on changes to SNAP could cause a breakdown in the coalition of agricultural, nutritional, and environmental interests needed to pass the farm bill.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), of which the Texas

Department of Agriculture is an active participant, has plans to advocate for a list of 10 Farm Bill priorities supported by all the state departments of agriculture.

By promoting a unified set of goals, the voices of state departments of agriculture and the constituents they support are amplified and have a stronger chance of influencing the outcome. 🇹🇽



## 2023 FARM BILL PRIORITIES

- AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
- ANIMAL DISEASE
- CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY
- CYBER SECURITY
- FOOD SAFETY
- HEMP DEFINITION
- INVASIVE SPECIES
- LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS
- SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS
- TRADE PROMOTION

# Commissioner Miller Joins GO TEXAN Partner AM Racing at Texas Motor Speedway

Commissioner Sid Miller was with the GO TEXAN race team in Fort Worth May 20, supporting the team and the GO TEXAN brand - which serves over 2,000 partner businesses. Austin Wayne Self, driver, finished 18th at the race.

“GO TEXAN and AM Racing both have roots that run deep in Texas, so it's a natural fit for GO TEXAN to partner with AM Racing to promote the best of Texas and the many businesses that call our great state home. Texans have an incredible sense of pride for our state and our heritage, and I'm excited for NASCAR and AM Racing fans all across the country to spot the mark and discover why they should GO TEXAN.” 🇹🇽



# Commissioner Miller Attends PBR Team Series Draft in Arlington

Commissioner Miller attended the 2022 Professional Bull Riders (PBR) Team Series Draft in Arlington, Texas. He joined in various discussions, including one with Katy Lucas, Mark George, and JJ Gottsch at the Cowboy Channel studio. They discussed the PBR Team Series and the importance of hosting western events in Texas.

Capitalizing on the popularity of bull riding around the world, and the growing appeal of cowboy values, the PBR has attracted many international athletes who travel to the United States to compete exclusively in the world's elite bull riding tour. 🇹🇽





**GO TEXAN.**<sup>®</sup>

**FIND THE MARK**  
*that matters*

## 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**



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

# Fresh From the Field



GO TEXAN!

## 2022 Vintners Cup Competition Applications Now Open!

Submissions are now open for the 2022 Vintners Cup competition, the only Texas wine evaluation of its kind. The submission deadline is July 1, 2022.

We welcome and encourage wines that are available to the general public as well as club and special-release wines. The goal of this project is to show some of the best wines in Texas. The winning Texas vintners and their wines will be

profiled in a special section of Texas Monthly's October 2022 issue.

Visit [UncorkTexasWines.com](http://UncorkTexasWines.com) for more information and send us your submissions. Your wine might have what it takes to be the best in Texas! 🇺🇸



### TexasMonthly

## NEW PARTNERS!

- ★ [Epicurean Refinado Aliemento, LLC](#)
- ★ [Mrs. Rio's Corn Products](#)
- ★ [Crazy About Crafts, LLC](#)
- ★ [Good Cheer Paper Co.](#)
- ★ [Socorro Valley Farms](#)
- ★ [El's Soap](#)
- ★ [I Saw The Sign Woodshop](#)
- ★ [Steph's Custom Sips, LLC](#)
- ★ [Crunchy Mama Candles, LLC](#)
- ★ [Carmie's Kitchen](#)
- ★ [RKJR Creation Point Company](#)
- ★ [Bayside Printing Company](#)
- ★ [PampaFest](#)
- ★ [Beauty by Apothecary](#)
- ★ [Tiff Lustig Chocolates, LLC](#)
- ★ [Yummy Gummies 4U Commercial Kitchen](#)
- ★ [Tommy Hanka Farm Headquarters](#)
- ★ [Frozen Rite Division](#)
- ★ [Redford and Co. LLC](#)
- ★ [JF Cattle Ranch](#)
- ★ [Emporium Pies](#)
- ★ [Apotheca Field Office](#)

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ★ COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

## Uncork Texas Wines

[UncorkTexasWines.com](http://UncorkTexasWines.com)

## Did You Know?

### TDA Package Inspection Program

inspects any commodities sold by weight or measure to ensure proper net content and labeling.

### TDA Pesticide Lab

collects pesticide residue data and contributes to a pesticide residue database of commodities sampled from U.S. and international markets.

### TDA Public Weighers

are officially licensed individuals who can issue an official weight certificate to declare the accurate weight of a commodity.



## Texas Ag Stats:

- ☆ There are more horses in Texas than any other state (330,671).
- ☆ Over 95,000 acres of vegetables were harvested in 2017.
- ☆ In 2017, 81,381 mules, burrows, and donkeys were reported in Texas.
- ☆ Texas is one of two states that produce guar gum, a food additive that is used to thicken and bind food products.

## Recipe of the Month

### The Homesick Texan's Peach Ice Cream

#### Ingredients:

2 cups sliced, peeled peaches  
1 cup granulated sugar, divided  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 cup heavy cream  
2 cups half-and-half  
¼ cup packed brown sugar  
4 egg yolks  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Directions:

**1.** Toss the peaches with ¾ cup of the granulated sugar, lemon juice and cinnamon. Cover, refrigerate and let macerate for 2 to 8 hours or until softened.

**2.** Divide the peach mixture in half. Pour half the mixture, peaches and liquid, into a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Gently mash the other half and then refrigerate.

**3.** To make the ice cream base, pour the peach puree into a saucepan and add the cream, half-and-half, remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and brown sugar. Cook over medium low heat until warm but not boiling, 3 to 5 minutes.

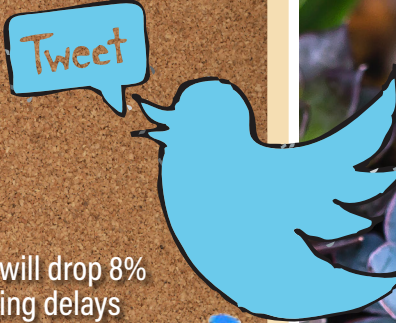
**4.** Meanwhile, combine the egg yolks with the vanilla and beat. Take the cream mixture off the heat, mix ½ cup of the cream mixture into the beaten egg yolks, then add the egg yolk mixture back into the pot with the rest of the cream mixture

[please click this link for remaining directions...](#)



# Your Thoughts...

*on the predicted drop in wheat production...*



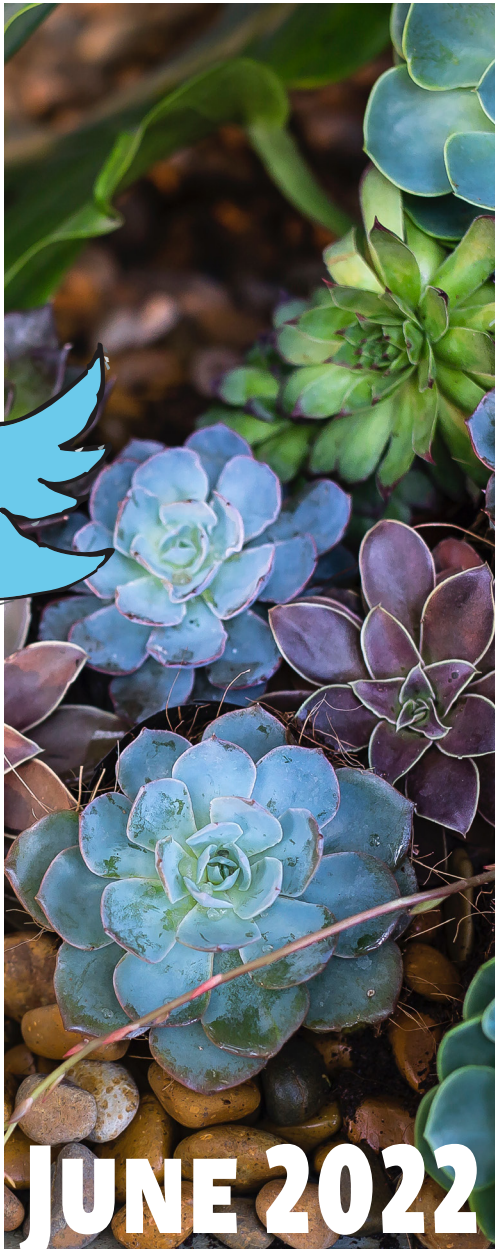
The USDA estimates U.S. winter wheat production will drop 8% due to the drought gripping the Great Plains. Planting delays are likely to cut the corn harvest as the upper Midwest is soaked with early continual rains. So far 2022 is a challenge for agriculture.

**Kathryn Touchton Whatley**  
Not to mention the cost of fertilizer and diesel.

**Bradley Volcek**  
I'm thinking 8% might be a little low.




**Lane Haley**  
Wheat harvest will be down a lot more than 8%. Majority of US wheat is TX panhandle, OK panhandle, and KS. There's almost no wheat anywhere from Garden City, KS to Amarillo, TX except a few irrigated acres.

**Spirit of Texas Winery**  
Pray for rain



**JUNE 2022**

## Tell Us... *what is your favorite type of peach?*

-  @TexasDepartmentofAgriculture
-  @TexasDeptofAg
-  @TexasAgriculture

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