

# texas neighbors

SUMMER 2022

Photo contest  
winners  
announced





# OPINION

## Who should you trust for farm and ranch truths?



**By Russell Boening**  
President  
Texas Farm Bureau

There's no shortage of "experts" when it comes to food and agriculture. Turn on the television news or peruse your favorite social media feed, and you're likely to get a slew of statements and opinions about our U.S. food supply based on the day's headlines.

I'm continually amazed how folks sometimes the furthest away from farming and ranching have positioned themselves on the front lines of public debate about agriculture.

But who can you trust? Or, more importantly, who should you trust?

The American public finds the truth in such matters. It may take time, but the cream (and truth) usually rises to the top.

The answer is farmers and ranchers. That's who you can and should trust.

As of March 2022, 86% of American adults say they trust farmers and ranchers, according to a national public opinion poll from the American Farm Bureau Federation. This is not a new development, either. Trust in

farmers and ranchers has remained high since November 2019.

The business of agriculture also gets high marks. For the first time in Gallup's 20 years of tracking Americans' views of various business and industry sectors, farming and agriculture is the clear leader among the list of 25.

Farming and agriculture were already among the top-rated industries before 2020. Its 69% positive rating now, however, represents an 11-percentage-point increase since the last Gallup survey. The cream is definitely rising to the top.

Restaurants and computers remain in the top four, with the grocery industry rounding out the group.

The "worst rated" distinction in the Gallup survey belongs to the federal government. Surprised?

I'm proud that Americans have a high level of trust in farmers and farmers like me and my family. They understand we're committed to feeding and clothing our country, while protecting the soil, air and water.

We want to leave the land better than we found it for our children and grandchildren, as well as our nation.

I think the public also recognizes current food supply chain challenges are not within the control of farmers and ranchers. Those challenges stem from influences well beyond the farm and ranch.

If you have a question, just ask us! We're grateful to be your best and most trusted source of information.



Vol. 87, No. 3 Summer 2022

TEXAS NEIGHBORS is published quarterly by the Texas Farm Bureau, 7420 Fish Pond Road, Waco, Texas 76710, (254) 772-3030.

Subscription price to Farm Bureau members is included in annual membership dues. The Texas Farm Bureau does not assume responsibility for statements by advertisers or for products advertised in TEXAS NEIGHBORS. For information on advertising, contact:

Advertising Manager

**KELLY BOGARD**  
254.751.2420

Publication Co-op

**TIMES CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**  
800.442.3276

Texas Farm Bureau website:

<https://www.texasfarmbureau.org>

Texas Table Top blog:

<http://tabletop.texasfarmbureau.org>



### PRESIDENT

Russell Boening, Poth

### VICE PRESIDENT

Pat D. McDowell, Shamrock

### SECRETARY-TREASURER

Pete J. Pawelek, Poteet

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO

Si Cook

### COMPTROLLER

Chris Daughtery

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Brian Adamek, Victoria

Warren Cude, Fort Stockton

Mark Daniel, Seymour

John Paul Dineen III, Waxahachie

Mickey Edwards, Lampasas

John K. Griffith, Alto

J. Walt Hagood, Wolfforth

Brian Jones, Edcouch

Pat D. McDowell, Shamrock

Kevin Wilkerson, Mabank

Sam Snyder, Moran

Pete J. Pawelek, Poteet

Brian Jones, Edcouch

Gary Joiner—Publisher

Julie Tomascik—Editor

Emmy Powell—Communications Specialist

Jessica Domel—Multimedia Reporter

Cindy Wennin—Graphic Designer

Angela Lujan—Graphic Designer



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

**GROWING A SWEET LEGACY**  
Meet the largest cantaloupe grower in the Lone Star State

06

**DRIVING BEHIND TRACTORS**  
Get tips for driving behind large farm equipment

08

**ICEBOX CAKE RECIPE**  
This icebox cake is red, white and blue and bursting with flavor

10

**2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**  
Congratulations to the 2022 TFB scholarship recipients

14

**WE ARE TEXAS FARM BUREAU**  
See what's happening at Texas Farm Bureau

16

**PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS NAMED**  
We asked. You delivered. See the 2022 photo contest winners.

20

**TEACHERS DIG INTO AGRICULTURE**  
Teachers dig into the science of agriculture through Summer Ag Institute

22

**STUDENTS FARM FROM SCHOOL**  
Students meet virtually with farmers and ranchers from the classroom

24

**TFB OFFERS HEALTH COVERAGE**  
TFB now offers health coverage for members

26

**FARMING IN A SUBDIVISION**  
Mike Atkinson farms on while the city of Houston moves in

28

**AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS**  
TFB members can set up a recurring draft for annual membership dues

# *Texas cantaloupe grower continues a sweet family legacy*



**By Emmy Powell  
Communications Specialist**

Texas cantaloupe is a staple for hot summer months, and this season brings a good crop from Dixondale Farms.

Family-owned since 1913, Dixondale Farms is the largest cantaloupe producer in Texas. The farm's location in Carrizo Springs offers an ideal climate of hot days and cool nights to grow cantaloupes with good sugar content, good straw color and flavor that is desired by consumers.

Although this year's heat has been a challenge, it's still been a successful growing season.

Harvest started June 1 due to the warmer temperatures.

"Our typical day during cantaloupe season starts before six o'clock," Mike Garza, farm manager, said. "We pick cantaloupes until all our fields that need to be picked are done. Some days it could be four hours, and some days it could be seven hours. We try to be done picking cantaloupes before 1 p.m. because it just gets too hot."

The entire process is dependent upon the weather and when each cantaloupe is ripe and ready

to be harvested. This limits the amount of acreage they harvest each day.

They grow, harvest, grade, chill, sell and transport all from the farm.

Planting begins in late Febru-

“The Texas chains really are supporting us, and they rely on us. We rely on them.”

—Bruce Frasier

ary and continues through mid-March.

"The cantaloupe grows at the vine, and then they start making blooms. Each bloom is the possibility of a cantaloupe," Bruce Frasier, Dixondale Farms president, said. "We bring bees in. They pollinate them. Generally speaking, from the time I see the first bloom to the time that we're harvesting is about 45 days."

The staggered planting sched-

ule allows them to have a steady supply of cantaloupes throughout the season.

Frasier noted the cantaloupes stay mainly within the state, where they ship to retailers like United Supermarkets, H-E-B, Al-

from their out-of-state competitors.

Sugar content within the fruit is measured with an indicator called the Brix scale. The standard measurement is nine. Carrizo Cantaloupes measure as high as 14 on the scale.

"I joke that maybe we should issue a toothbrush with every sale, so they can brush their teeth afterward to keep away from cavities," Frasier said.

The sweet legacy of the Carrizo Cantaloupes and Dixondale Farms is one Frasier is proud to continue for his family, his employees and the town of Carrizo Springs.

That helps them focus on the primary reasons they work hard to farm today with an eye to the future.

"One is our employees and Carrizo Springs, a small town of 5,000 people. Dixondale Farms is a big factor in the economy," he said. "The other is our vendors. They are relying on us to continue. We are the fourth generation. I married into this family. I have been fortunate enough to gain the respect of all the employees, and they depend on me. I depend on them."

bertsons, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and Sprouts.

Customers know and love the Carrizo Cantaloupes brand.

"Our cantaloupes are called Carrizo Cantaloupes, and (customers) know they are going to be consistently good. They also know they are not going to be around a long time," Frasier said.

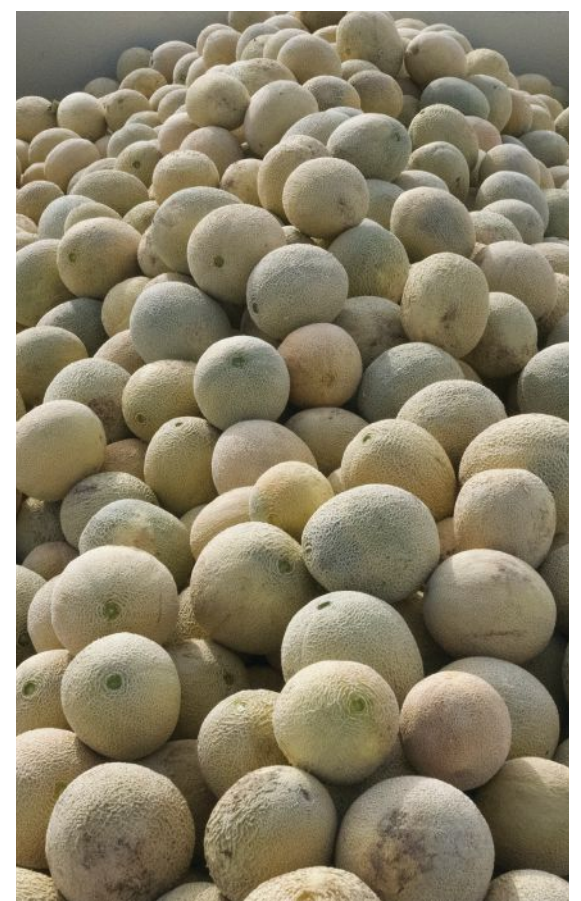
The short transit time, aroma and sweetness of their Texas cantaloupes are what set them apart



*Bruce Frasier and his wife, Jeanie, stand next to boxes of Carrizo Cantaloupes.*



*Employees at Dixondale Farms help bring in the cantaloupes from the field in Carrizo Springs.*



*The cantaloupes are only available for a limited time and sold to retailers across the state.*

# 5 tips when driving behind farm equipment

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

It's that time of year again, when Texas farmers are harvesting their crops. That means more tractors and large equipment are on the road with you.

We've all seen them. They're large, wide and slow. Your car is fast—much faster than the 25 miles per hour of the farmer's equipment. But public roads are often the only way to move it.

And because Texas is a top agricultural state, every Texan—urban,

suburban and rural—will eventually encounter large farm equipment on the road.

Your fast cars and farmers' slow tractors can be a recipe for disaster. Accidents involving farm equipment and cars happen every year. And families are forever changed.

Farmers respect your right to the road, but they'd like that same courtesy returned to them.

It seems, however, that awareness is often the toughest thing to grow. Awareness about what farmers and ranchers do, but also

about farm safety—on and off the road.

That's where we all come into play.

It can be frustrating, but those farmers are just trying to get to and from their job, too. Only it's a little different. Their office is that tractor you're stuck behind. Their hours are likely sun up to sun down, and they're trying to beat whatever Mother Nature is throwing their way.

But they get it. They know 25 miles per hour isn't the fastest

or most ideal speed. They understand you have places to be, deadlines to meet and families to see. They can relate.

But one accident, one moment, one day—all could be life changing.

So slow down, and enjoy some good tunes on the radio, catch up on a podcast or listen to an audio book. Being behind a slow-moving vehicle will only add a little extra time to your commute. But being a responsible and courteous driver could save your life and the farmer's.

## 5 things you can do when you meet farm equipment on the road

1. Be alert and cautious. Give large farm equipment and other slow-moving vehicles space.
2. Do not pass if you are in a space designated as a "No Passing Zone" or in any area that is not safe to do so—intersections, bridges and railroad crossings, among others.
3. Make sure the tractor isn't trying to make a left turn before you pass on the left.
4. Don't tailgate.
5. Be careful when you do get the chance to pass. And often, farmers will move their equipment over when it is safe to do so.



We value our long-standing partnership with Farm Bureau and are proud to offer this exclusive members reward.

# \$500 EXCLUSIVE CASH REWARD\*

ON AN ELIGIBLE NEW MAVERICK, RANGER, F-150® OR SUPER DUTY®



FORD MAVERICK

FORD RANGER

FORD F-150

FORD SUPER DUTY



Computer-generated image with available features shown.

**BIG SPRING**  
BIG SPRING FORD, INC.  
432-267-7424  
www.bigspringford.com

**CALDWELL**  
BUD CROSS FORD  
979-567-4621  
www.budcrossfordtx.com

**CARTHAGE**  
EXCEL FORD LINCOLN, LP  
888-693-3821  
www.excelford.net

**COLUMBUS**  
CAVENDER FORD  
855-874-2232  
www.cavenderford.com

**COMANCHE**  
BAYER FORD  
877-356-2707  
www.bayerautogroup.com

**DALHART**  
XIT FORD  
806-244-8511  
www.xitfordtrucks.com

**DUMAS**  
PIKE FORD OF DUMAS  
806-935-4163  
www.pikefordofdumas.com

**EASTLAND**  
STANLEY FORD  
888-486-9896  
www.stanleyautogroup.com

**GRAHAM**  
BAILEY AUTO PLAZA  
940-549-1313  
www.baileyautoplaza.com

**GRANBURY**  
SHOTTENKIRK FORD OF  
GRANBURY  
817-279-5900  
www.mikebrownford.net

**HOUSTON**  
AUTONATION FORD GULF  
FREEWAY  
713-371-4000  
www.autonationfordgulffreeway.com

**HUTTO**  
COVERT FORD OF TAYLOR  
512-759-1515  
www.covertauto.com

**LAMPASAS**  
HOFFPAUIR FORD  
800-460-4171  
www.hford.com

**MISSION**  
SPIKES FORD  
888-476-3704  
www.spikesford.net

**ROSENBERG**  
LEGACY FORD  
832-612-3971  
www.legacyford.com

**SAN ANGELO**  
JIM BASS FORD, INC.  
325-949-4621  
www.bassbunch.com

**SNYDER**  
WILSON MOTORS  
800-545-5019  
www.wilsonmotorstx.com

**SWEETWATER**  
STANLEY FORD  
325-236-6355  
www.stanleyautogroup.com

**WICHITA FALLS**  
WICHITA FALLS FORD LIN-  
COLN  
940-692-1121  
www.wichitafallsford.net

**WILLS POINT**  
WILLS POINT FORD  
888-251-4814  
www.willspointford.com

**WINNSBORO**  
TEXAS COUNTRY FORD  
903-342-3700  
www.texascountryford.com



FARM BUREAU  
**ADVANTAGE**

How We're Driving Change.

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

\*Farm Bureau Exclusive Cash Reward is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward on the purchase or lease of an eligible new 2021/2022/2023 Ford Maverick, Ranger, F-150 or Super Duty. This incentive is not available on F-150 Lightning™, F-150® Raptor®, F-650 and F-750 Super Duty. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease and take new retail delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by January 3, 2023. Visit [FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com](http://FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com) or see your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details. Note to dealer: Claim in VINCENT using #38326

Red, White & Blue  
*Icebox*  
*Cake*

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pkg. graham crackers
- 8 oz. cream cheese softened
- 2 3.4 oz. vanilla pudding mix
- 2 1/2 c. milk
- 12 oz. whipped topping
- 3 c. strawberries sliced
- 2 c. blueberries

## INSTRUCTIONS

Combine cream cheese and pudding mixes in large mixer until smooth.

Slowly pour the milk into the pudding mixture while continuing to mix.

Fold in whipped topping.

Spread a thin layer of the pudding mixture in the bottom of a 9x13 dish.

Place a layer of graham crackers on top of the pudding.

Spread a thicker layer of pudding mixture over graham crackers.

Top with a layer of blueberries and strawberries.

Place more crackers on top of berries starting a new set of layers.

Repeat until you reach the top of the pan finishing with berries.

Cover and refrigerate for at least two hours to firm pudding.





TEXAS FARM BUREAU MEMBERSHIP  
DOESN'T COST—IT PAYS!

# WHAT DOES YOUR MEMBERSHIP DO FOR YOU?

Texas Farm Bureau members receive a variety  
of member benefits that provide  
value, savings and community impact.



Health



Products



Services



Travel



Vehicle

**DISCOVER YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS!**

[texasfarmbureau.org/memberbenefits](https://texasfarmbureau.org/memberbenefits)



TEXAS FARM BUREAU®

# Texas Farm Bureau names 2022 scholarship recipients

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) announced the organization's 2022 scholarship recipients, awarding \$293,000 to graduating high school seniors and enrolled college students.

"Continuing your education—whether at a trade school, college or university—can be expensive, but scholarships available through Texas Farm Bureau can help put students on the path to finding a career they are passionate about," TFB Youth Outreach Coordinator McKenna Bush said. "We are impressed with the 2022 scholarship recipients and are proud to invest in

their future and the future of Texas agriculture."

Thirteen graduating seniors were awarded Young Farmer & Rancher scholarships. One student received the Dick Mitchell Memorial Scholarship, and 13 seniors were awarded district memorial and honorary scholarships.

An additional 39 high school seniors received district scholarships.

Enrolled college students also received financial assistance from TFB.

Three Young Farmer & Rancher Enrolled College Student scholarships were awarded, and four additional college students received the spring Mia Balko Student Teach-

ing Scholarship (see story on next page), which will assist recipients with expenses associated with off-campus student teaching. Another four college students also will be awarded the student teaching scholarship in the fall.

TFB announced the \$20,000 S.M. True Jr. Agricultural Scholar Award winner (see story below). The scholarship honors S.M. True Jr., a former TFB president, and his commitment to agriculture.

Four recipients of TFB's new \$10,000 Rural Veterinary Scholarship (see story on next page) were also announced. The recipients must be second- or third-year veterinary students in a Texas DVM

professional program and must plan to enter a rural and/or food animal practice in Texas upon completion of their degree.

TFB also awards \$25,000 to high school students through FCCLA, Texas 4-H and Texas FFA, as well as \$1,500 through the Texas Rural Education Association Scholarship.

TFB's Free Enterprise Speech Contest winners were awarded \$27,500 in scholarships, and \$35,000 was made available to students through Texas State Technical College.

To view the full list of scholarship recipients, visit [texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships](https://texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships).

## Clayton Elbel receives TFB's \$20,000 True Scholar Award

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

A Texas A&M University student with a passion for agriculture received Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) most prestigious scholarship.

Clayton Elbel of Comal County is this year's recipient of the S.M. True Jr. Agricultural Scholar Award. The \$20,000 scholarship is presented annually to a deserving student in honor of former TFB President S.M. True Jr.

"President True lived a life of inspiration and service—serving his family, Farm Bureau and agriculture," TFB President Russell Boening said. "Like former President True, Clayton shares a passion for servant leadership, learning and agriculture. We're proud to honor him with this award."

Elbel is a junior on a combined degree program through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and The Bush School of Government and Public Service. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics and is also working toward his master's degree in public administration.

He grew up on his family's farm and ranch in Spring Branch.

Throughout his high school and collegiate career, Elbel has dedicated his time to serving agricul-

ture in leadership roles, including a one-year term as Texas FFA state vice president.

He is also a TAMU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Council representative, a member of the university's Horse Judging team and helps lead the FarmLink Project.

FarmLink is a national organization that helps place surplus foods from farmers, distributors and retailers with community food banks to help reduce food waste and increase community access to fresh foods.

Elbel is the Hunger and Outreach team leader for FarmLink. He and his team of 15 volunteers moved about 19 million pounds of food over the last year-and-a-half.

"My life's purpose is rooted in integrity and working in our food and fiber system," Elbel said. "Food banks have a lot of canned goods or dry goods, but not a lot of fresh produce or protein. FarmLink helps provide people with access to fresh foods and vegetables at food banks, giving them a sense of dignity through food."

Elbel also won the 2021 TFB Collegiate Discussion Meet and represented Texas in the national contest.

He will be a political and eco-



Clayton Elbel

nomic affairs intern this summer for the U.S. Department of State in Rome.

After completing his master's degree, Elbel plans to attend law school and focus on agricultural policy, specifically administrative law.

"One of the things I've realized through my professional experiences is that a lot of the policy implemented at the state and federal level goes through administrative law," he said. "That's why I want to focus my career in that area. I want to explore the intersection of agriculture and public policy and be a voice for rural producers and growers like my parents."

Elbel's various leadership, professional development and agricultural experiences have helped him grow into the individual he is today.

"My academic performance, leadership and commitment to excellence will help me serve as an influential voice for agriculture, fulfilling Farm Bureau's mission," he said. "To receive this scholarship named after someone with such a large impact on Farm Bureau is an honor. Farm Bureau expanded under Mr. True's leadership, and that reflects someone who had a mindset of service. I want to leave a legacy like that."

Other finalists for the award were Candace Lundrum of Bexar County; Natalie McDaniel of Dallam-Hartley County; Kristen Massingill of Hamilton County; and Sydney Orsborn of Van Zandt County.

The TFB board of directors established the True scholar award in 2014.

To be eligible for the scholarship, a student must have at least 60 hours of college credit and be enrolled in a four-year college or university. To receive the full amount, the recipient must continue to major in agriculture and maintain a satisfactory grade point average.

## TFB's Mia Balko Student Teaching Scholarship winners announced



**Christian Floyd**



**Katelyn Grantham**



**Kerra James**



**Taylor Sanders**

Four college students majoring in agricultural education received the Mia Balko Student Teaching Scholarship from Texas Farm Bureau (TFB).

The scholarship recipients include Christian Floyd, Katelyn Grantham, Kerra James and Taylor Sanders. All four students attend Tarleton State University in Stephenville.

"These four students are passionate about agricultural education and inspiring the next generation to learn more about agriculture and pursue ag-related careers," McKenna Bush, TFB youth out-

reach coordinator, said. "We are proud to play a role in their future endeavors of connecting students to agriculture."

College students from TFB member-families who are pursuing a degree in agricultural education applied for the \$1,500 scholarship in the spring. The funds will be used during the fall semester of off-campus student teaching.

As a student teacher, there's not typically time to have another job due to classroom responsibilities, Bush noted.

"Student teachers work alongside an experienced teacher for

a semester as part of the agricultural education experience. They prepare lessons, teach classes and supervise various FFA projects and contest trainings. It's an invaluable part of the learning experience for future agricultural science teachers," Bush said. "That schedule doesn't allow them to have another job, so this scholarship aims to alleviate some of the financial burden for these students who are preparing for careers in agricultural education."

The scholarship was renamed the Mia Balko Student Teaching Scholarship in 2021 after the late

Mia Balko, who was a former agricultural science teacher and director of Youth Outreach for TFB.

There are about 2,400 full-time agricultural science teachers in Texas and over 1,100 active FFA chapters.

"Agricultural science teachers are in demand, and TFB wants to do our part helping students prepare to fill those roles," Bush said.

Four scholarships will also be awarded in the fall to ag education seniors going into their student teaching semester in spring 2023. Details will be available later this year on [texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships](https://texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships).

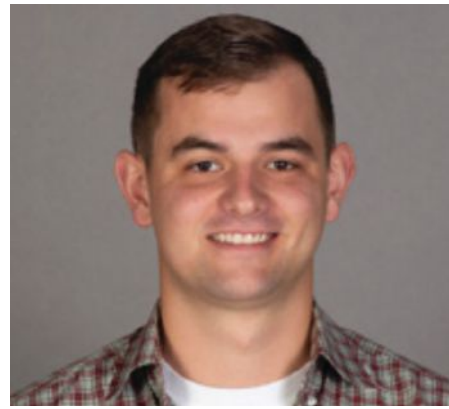
## First TFB Rural Veterinary Scholarship recipients named



**Tucker Roberts**



**Manuel Sifuentes**



**Travis Twining**



**Emily Watson**

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) awarded scholarships to four college students pursuing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree.

The Rural Veterinary Scholarships, valued at \$10,000, are new to TFB's scholarship program this year. The state's largest farm and ranch organization established the new scholarship to help ease the financial burden on veterinary students who seek further experiences and education with food animal species.

The recipients include Tucker Roberts, Manuel Sifuentes, Travis Twining and Emily Watson. They are all students at Texas A&M University.

"There is a clear need for veterinarians in rural areas of the state. This new scholarship was created to help support veterinary students who wish to pursue a career focused on the needs of rural communities and the food animal side of veterinary medicine," McKenna Bush, TFB youth outreach coordi-

nator, said.

Animal agriculture is a large part of the Lone Star State, but a shortage of rural veterinarians could put that business at risk.

With fewer veterinary graduates heading to rural areas, many longtime rural veterinarians have no successors.

That leaves farmers and ranchers in a tough situation—call a veterinarian who could be hundreds of miles away or solve problems on their own.

"TFB members from all across Texas need additional veterinary service, especially in emergency situations," Bush said. "This scholarship program has been designed to lend assistance to those who wish to fill that need."

The scholarship was open to second- and third-year veterinary students in a Texas DVM professional program. Applicants must plan to enter a rural and/or food animal practice in Texas upon completion of their degree.

# TFB awards scholarships to FFA, 4-H, FCCLA students

Each year, in addition to the scholarships available to youth state-wide, Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) awards scholarships to high school seniors through the Texas FFA Association, Texas 4-H Foundation and the Texas Association of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

TFB is a longtime supporter of the three youth organizations, working with the students on leadership development, service learning and agricultural advocacy and literacy to help cultivate strong leaders for Texas agriculture's future.

## Texas FFA recipients



**Ember Reyes**

Ember Reyes graduated from James Madison High School in San Antonio and plans to attend West Texas A&M University to major in animal science with a focus on veterinary science.

Reyes served as the state president of Texas FFA and held numerous leadership roles at the chapter, district and area levels throughout her FFA career. She participated in several career development events, leadership development events and speaking development events.

Reyes participated in the World Food Prize and other student organizations, as well as volunteered with Guide Dogs for the Blind.



**Emily Dreyer**

Emily Dreyer graduated from Tuloso-Midway High School in Corpus Christi and plans to attend Baylor University and double major in entrepreneurship and religion.

Dreyer served as the first vice president of Texas FFA. She was active in her FFA chapter where she participated in several career development events, leadership development events and speaking development events. She also served in several leadership roles at the chapter, district and area levels.

Dreyer was also a cheerleader, played golf and participated in other student organizations.

## Texas 4-H recipients



**Willow Goldsmith**

Willow Goldsmith completed her homeschool education and one year of Austin Community College. She plans to continue her education at St. Mary's University in San Antonio and major in English with a minor in music. She would like to later attend law school and pursue a career as an environmental lawyer.

Through 4-H, Goldsmith was active in the Photography Ambassador Program, and she traveled to Washington, D.C. for a photographer summit.

Goldsmith also participated in theater and performing arts, Girl Scouts and was a member of the Girl Scout Harp Ensemble.



**Trae Peterson**

Trae Peterson graduated from Southland High School and plans to attend Texas Tech University to major in animal science with a focus on veterinary science. Her emphasis will be on equine science to prepare her for a career in equine physical chiropractic and hydrotherapy.

Peterson exhibited livestock and participated in consumer decision making contests through 4-H. She also helped with multiple community service programs and activities as a member of the Garza County Golden Clover Club.

In addition to 4-H, Peterson participated in rodeo, several sports and student organizations.

## Texas FCCLA recipient



**Thalia Ponce-Serrano**

Thalia Ponce-Serrano graduated from Stamford High School and plans to attend Texas Tech University to major in family and consumer sciences education.

Ponce-Serrano served as state vice president of programs for Texas FCCLA. She previously served as Region 1 vice president of achievement. She has been active in Texas FCCLA contests and held numerous leadership roles.

She was also active in several other organizations and extracurricular activities, including marching band, UIL academics, One Act Play, a class officer and Student Council secretary.

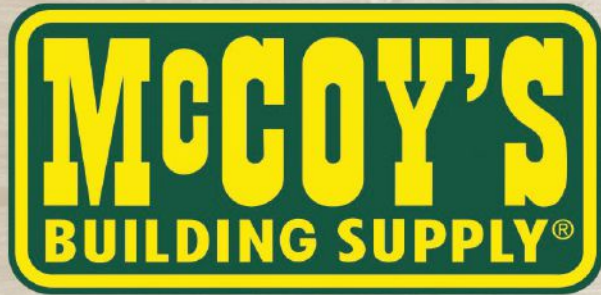
**BUILD YOUR FUTURE**

TEXAS FARM BUREAU YOUTH PROGRAMS  
help cultivate the next generation

[youthactivities@txfb.org](mailto:youthactivities@txfb.org)  
254.751.2258

Learn about Texas Farm Bureau's Youth Programs  
[texasfarmbureau.org/youth](https://www.texasfarmbureau.org/youth)

SPEAKING CONTESTS  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
SUMMER PROGRAMS  
AND MORE!



# FARM & RANCH OUTFITTERS

Fencing · Cattle Systems · Horse Stalls · Corral Panels · Gates · Arenas

[mccoys.com/farmandranch](http://mccoys.com/farmandranch)



## 4th Generation of FAMILY LEADERSHIP

Meagan McCoy Jones Becomes CEO June 1, 2022

"A company like ours doesn't succeed over this many decades without hard work, hustle, and the deep loyalty of our team and trust of our customers. I've grown up at McCoy's with the patience, help, and support of so many - through them I fell in love with our business and industry."

## WE'RE A PROUD SUPPORTER





# THIS IS FARM BUREAU

## Applications open for TFB's 2022 Clover Cash Grant Program

Applications are now open for Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) 2022 Clover Cash Grant Program, which supports Texas 4-H activities across the state.

The grants are available to county, district and state 4-H programs to help fund hands-on activities to grow student agricultural knowledge and increase agricultural advocacy efforts.

"We're looking for projects that provide hands-on experiences and ideas that really engage students," McKenna Bush, TFB youth outreach coordinator, said. "We want to see projects that expand students' knowledge of agriculture in ways that are meaningful and memorable."

At the county level, four grants up to \$500, four grants up to \$750 and three grants up to \$1,000 each will be available.

Four grants up to \$1,500 each will be awarded at the Texas 4-H district level, and three grants up to \$2,000 each will be awarded

for state projects.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents, district 4-H specialists or adult leaders of any county, district or state 4-H program are eligible to apply. State 4-H staff responsible for any state level 4-H program are also eligible.

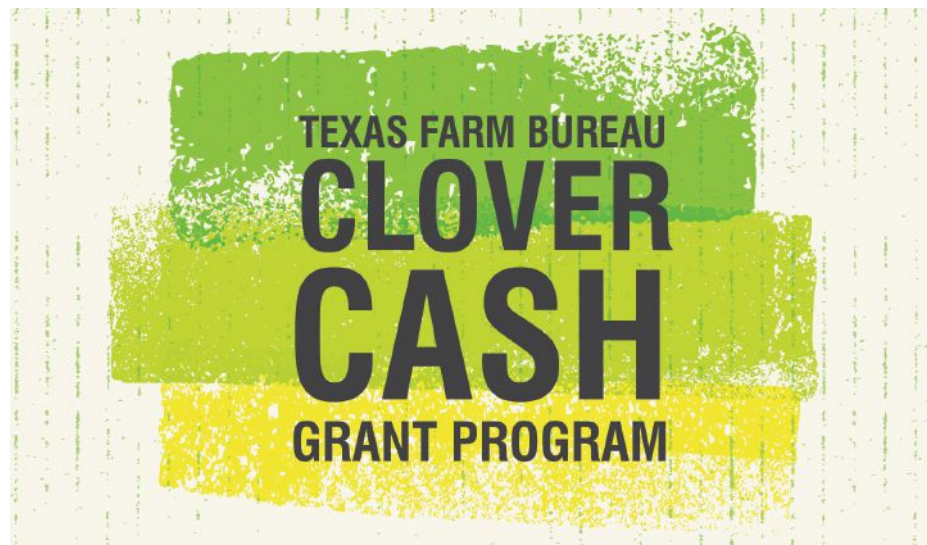
The funds will be disbursed by the Texas 4-H Foundation to 4-H clubs only, not an individual.

For the application to be considered, students must be directly engaged in the educational component of the project.

"Proposals that received funding in previous years involved things like vermiculture, hydroponics and cooking classes. The more interactive the project is, the better," Bush said.

A timeline of the project, a list of all community partners and a detailed budget with estimated expenses must also be included in the application.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative in their project pro-



posals and descriptions.

"Clover Cash creates more opportunities to help 4-H programs connect young kids with agriculture," Bush said. "This gives programs at local, district and state levels more opportunities to interact with students as they seek to learn more about agricultural production in Texas."

The program, which launched in 2020, has provided \$40,000 in grants to help numerous 4-H clubs and activities with program-

ming and activities related to agriculture and advocacy.

Program guidelines and an application form are available online at [texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities](https://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities).

Applications are due by noon on Aug. 15.

Applicants will receive their funds once winners are announced in mid-October.

Contact Bush at [youthactivities@txfb.org](mailto:youthactivities@txfb.org) or call 254-751-2489 with questions.

## TFB testifies before Texas House on border security

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) testified before the Texas House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety, sharing concerns about the ongoing crisis at the Texas-Mexico border.

During the interim session, state lawmakers are studying the issue to prepare for the next legislative session that gavel in January 2023.

"The crisis at the Texas-Mexico border is a critical issue that is negatively impacting the families and livelihoods of those farming, ranching and living along the border," TFB District 13 State Director Brian Jones said. "As the crisis continues, we are disappointed in the lack of action from the federal government in putting forth solutions that would

address this problem."

Jones noted that farmers and ranchers have faced threats to themselves, their families and their employees.

"Over the last several years, farmers and ranchers throughout South Texas have increasingly encountered tragic situations of finding dead bodies on their property, having vehicles broken into or stolen, facing home break-ins or being faced with armed individuals crossing through their land," he said. "Often, this occurs in rural remote locations with no cell phone service and law enforcement being an hour away, at best."

Another concern shared by farmers and ranchers along the border is the damage to fields and farming infrastructure such

as fences, watering equipment and other machinery and farm equipment.

"Law enforcement or border patrol personnel must often engage in high-speed car chases of illegal immigrants," Jones said. "To get away from authorities, sometimes illegal immigrants will drive through agricultural property, damaging fences and fields. Similar disturbances occur by those who cross by foot with reports of cut fences and broken watering troughs. When these instances occur, farmers must quickly make repairs and, unfortunately, incur significant ongoing costs in the process."

The crisis along the U.S.-Mexico border threatens their personal safety, overwhelms local resources and causes serious fi-

nancial hardship and disruption.

"The current situation on our nation's border is unsustainable for hardworking farm and ranch families who work to feed and clothe the world," Jones said. "It is critically important for the federal government to recognize the seriousness of the issue and develop a plan to stop the drastic increase in illegal immigration, which is posing a major risk to our state and nation."

TFB continues to advocate for a long-term solution to the illegal immigration crisis that will effectively help farmers and ranchers in border towns and counties.

For more information on border security impacts, visit TFB's webpage at [texasfarmbureau.org/border-crisis-impacts](https://texasfarmbureau.org/border-crisis-impacts).

# Report highlights Texas Farm Bureau accomplishments

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) published its 2021 Accomplishments Report detailing successes in membership, advocacy, leader development and other program areas.

The 32-page report can be found on [texasfarmbureau.org](https://texasfarmbureau.org).

“Texas Farm Bureau accomplished its mission of being the Voice of Texas Agriculture in 2021, as we have continued to do throughout our decades of grassroots advocacy and involvement,” TFB President Russell Boening said. “A look at the year’s activities, successes and programs is available in the 2021 Accomplishments Report.”

Achieving membership goals each year is a priority for the organization, as well as providing member benefits and services to help member-families save time and money. The membership year ended with TFB membership at 535,614 member-families, which represents 21 consecutive years of membership growth.

TFB strives to represent Texas farmers, ranchers, landowners and rural residents at local, state and national levels to help keep the Lone Star State growing for generations to come. Organizational policy set by TFB members is pursued and implemented to ensure Texas agriculture’s voice is heard.

Highlights of the legislative and commodity activities from 2021 include achieving meaningful eminent domain reform, expanding liability protections to livestock owners and authorization of a federal hog toxicant study using warfarin.

Leader development and youth and educational outreach are important to the state’s largest general farm and ranch organization. Innovative programs, educational activities and urban outreach efforts helped TFB reach adults and children across the state.

The Doorways to Agriculture exhibit, which was displayed at livestock shows and community

events, reached both urban and rural Texans with messages and stories of agriculture in the Lone Star State.

TFB adds volume, reach and depth to the Voice of Texas Agriculture mission by communicating with various publics. The organization shares the stories of farmers and ranchers through print and digital publications, social media, videos and the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network, as well as works with media and county Farm Bureaus to promote stories of members and agriculture.

In 2021, TFB responded to 173 media inquiries from local, state and national publications and broadcast stations about agriculture and rural Texas.

The radio network reached an all-time high in the number of affiliated stations with over 120 stations, and the Communications division created a TikTok account to reach a younger demographic.

Winter Storm Uri hit Texas in



February 2021, leaving the state in an icy embrace for days. TFB and county Farm Bureau leaders contributed \$262,197 through the Helping Hands program to provide assistance to local food and emergency relief organizations.

The full report can be found in the grey footer of the TFB website by clicking TFB Accomplishments or by visiting [texasfarmbureau.org/2021accomplishments](https://texasfarmbureau.org/2021accomplishments).



## TEXAS AG TODAY

Brought to you by Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network

From the Pineywoods of East Texas to the rocky ranges of the Trans-Pecos and from the Panhandle to the Rio Grande Valley, *Texas Ag Today* brings you the daily ag news you need to know. Hosted by the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network.

Texas Ag Today is available on Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher and TuneIn.

**Subscribe to the podcast  
to get the latest news  
in Texas agriculture!**



Scan me if you  
have an **Android**



Scan me if you  
have an **iPhone**

[TEXASFARMBUREAU.ORG/RADIO](https://texasfarmbureau.org/radio)

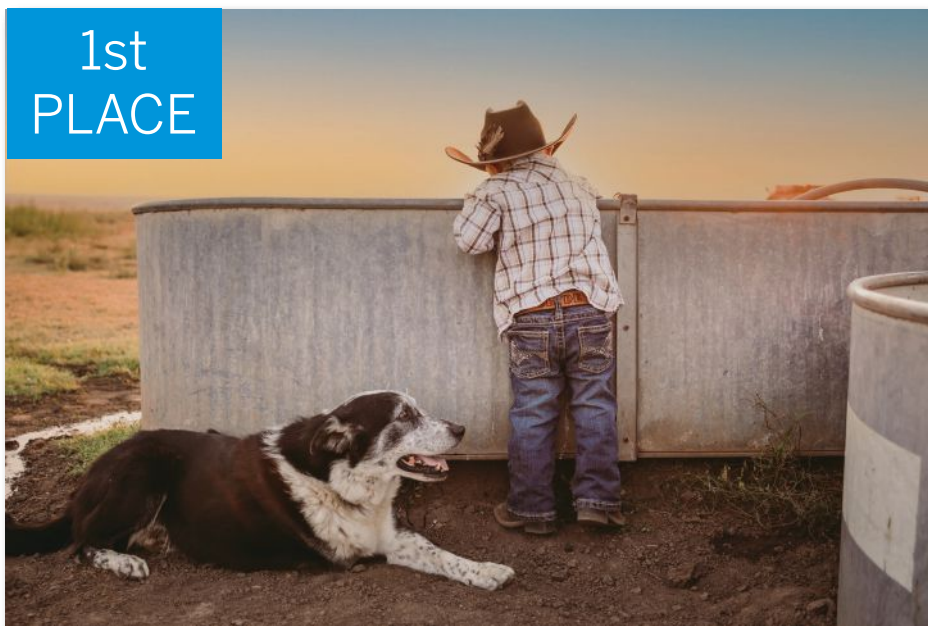


**TEXAS FARM BUREAU®**

# 2022 TEXAS FARM BUREAU Photo Contest **WINNERS**

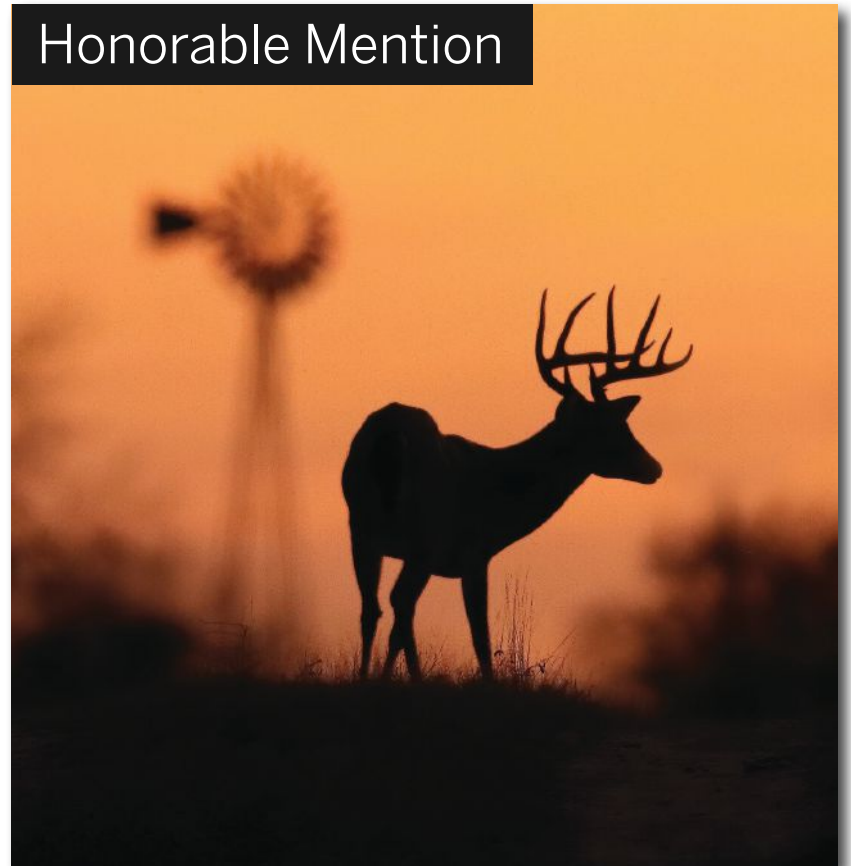
Each year, we ask Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) members and their families to capture rural Texas and the rural lifestyle through the lens of their camera. And each year, they deliver.

Hundreds of photos from TFB members across the state were submitted to this year's contest. Though it was a difficult task, TFB staff critiqued the photos capturing various parts of the Lone Star State and selected this year's winners.



1st  
PLACE

All in a day's work. This young boy and his dog spend the last minutes of the day cooling off in the water trough. This year's winning photo was submitted by Karri Wieners of Carson County.



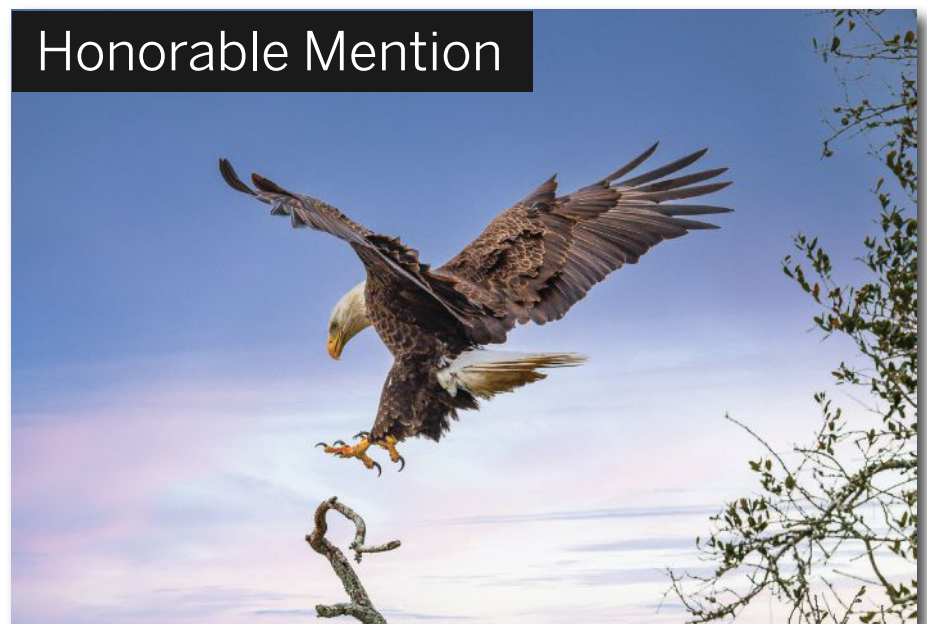
Honorable Mention

Butch Ramirez of Webb County snapped this photo of a white-tailed buck at sunset, earning him Honorable Mention.



2nd  
PLACE

Our second place photo was submitted by Autumn Felps of her father assessing the damage after the devastating fires near Eastland this year.



Honorable Mention

Meghan Stade of Wharton County captured this photo of an eagle coming in for a landing.



# MORE GOOD PHOTOS

More good photos include (from top, clockwise):

Hay, hay, hay! Jacklyn Bleeker of Bastrop County captured this photo.

Everyone needs a drink after a hard day of work! Lindsey Arnold of Collin County submitted this photo.

Callused and worn hands tell the many stories of hard work and passion. This photo of working hands was submitted by Whitney Ingram of Milam County.

Born to farm. This photo of a future farmer was captured by Shawna Wallace of Gober.

Aerial applicators are agriculture's "Top Gun" pilots. Lori Venable of Montague County submitted this photo.



# EVEN MORE GOOD PHOTOS

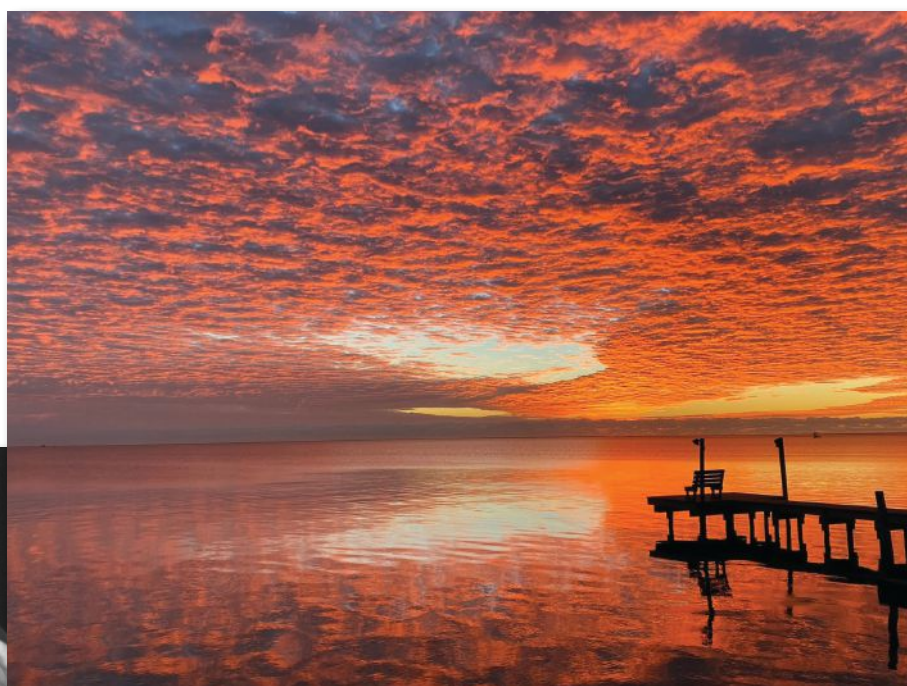
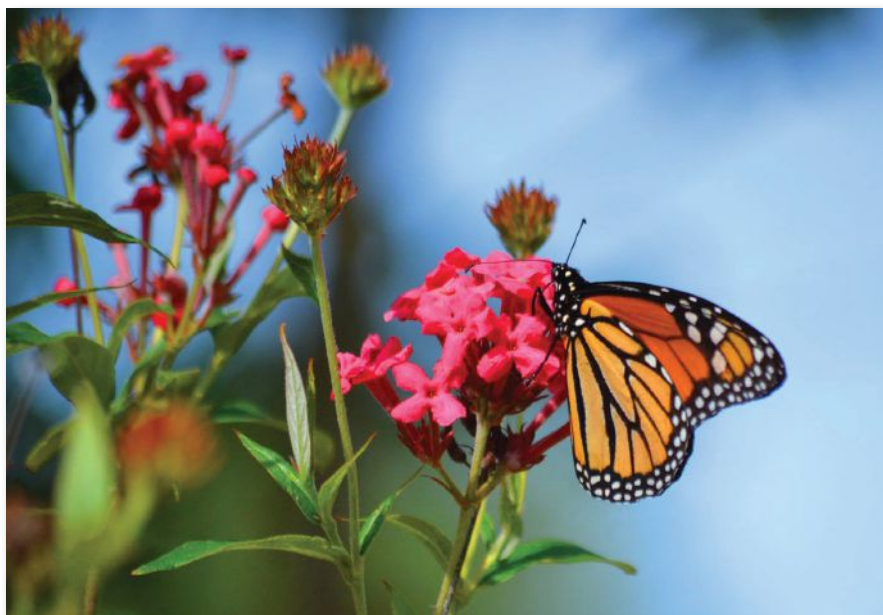
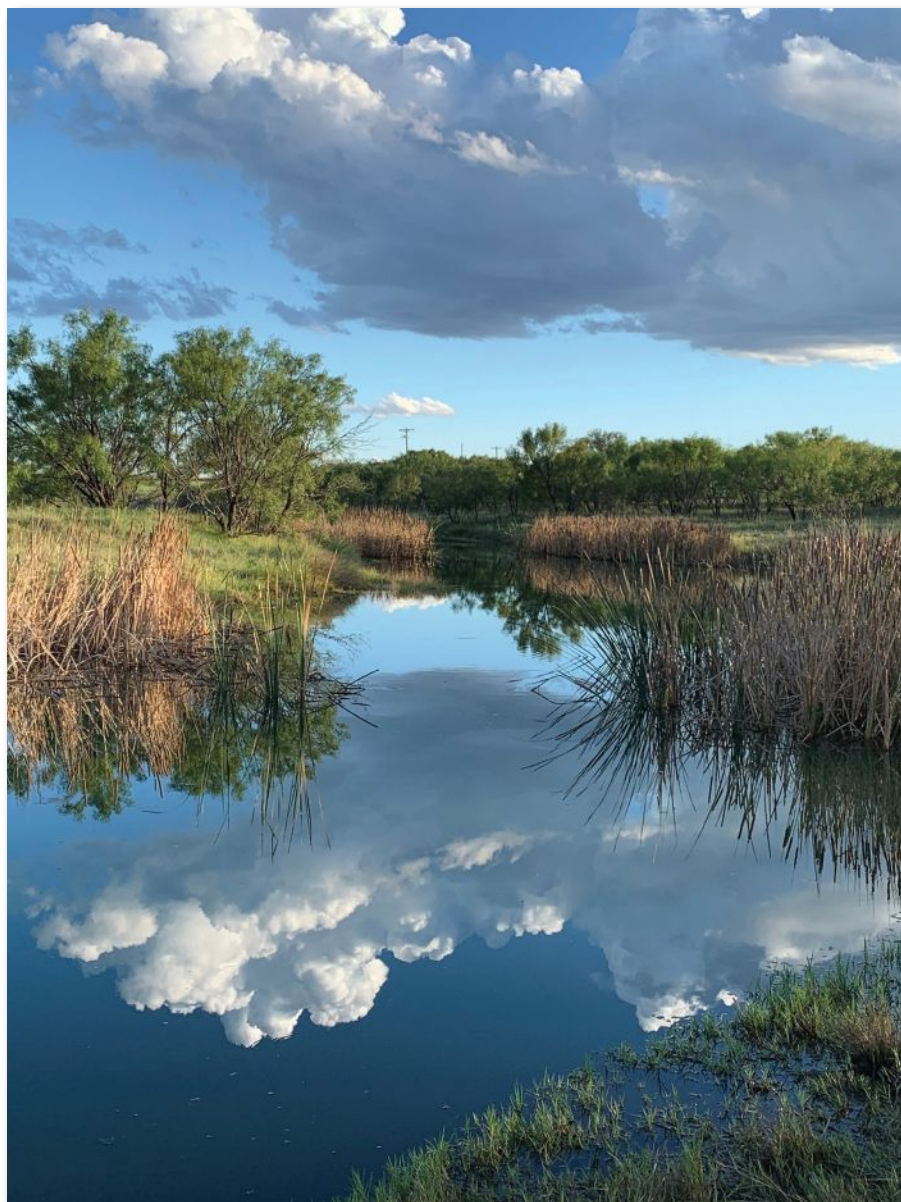
**Even more good photos include (from top, clockwise):**

Rural route views. This photo was submitted by Deborah Hopenhensee of Runnels County.

Gina Harvey of Chambers County snapped this beautiful sunrise on Aransas Bay in Rockport.

Guiding hands. Marcie Faske of Snyder captured this black and white photo.

Butterflies are important pollinators. Adolfo Sanchez III of Jim Wells County captured this photo.



**Even more good photos include (from top, clockwise):**

Sun setting on a herd of cattle. This photo was submitted by Jeff Wren of Cumby.

Reelin' in some fun and a beautiful sunset! This photo was captured by John McDonald at Canyon Lake in the Texas Hill Country.

Gobble! Gobble! Barbara Oxsheer of Angleton snapped this photo of turkeys.

Matthew "Nick" Ottensman of Bee County captured this colorful flower with a busy bee hard at work.





# Texas Farm Bureau's SUMMER AG INSTITUTE brings agriculture to Texas teachers

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

Although school may be out, class was in for nearly 50 teachers who attended Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) Summer Agricultural Institute in mid-June.

They grew their agricultural knowledge and cultivated techniques to incorporate agriculture during the four-day professional development event.

The educators toured farms, ranches and agribusinesses in the Central Texas area. They participated in hands-on activities to replicate in their own classrooms and heard from agricultural professionals and educational experts.

## Farm, ranch tours

The teachers visited Bentwood Dairy in Bosque County to learn more about modern dairy farming. They heard from dairy farmers David and Jodi Jackson about animal welfare, cattle nutrition and sustainability.

The Jacksons answered questions about antibiotic use, milk prices and the rising production costs they're facing.

The teachers saw silage being chopped for cattle feed and learned more about the Jackson's diverse farming operation, too.

At W-4 Ranch in Morgan, the group talked with the ranch manager, Jeff Chaffin, about how the operation raises seedstock Hereford cattle and how the drought is impacting their decisions on the ranch.

They learned about technology used on the ranch, including electronic identification, DNA testing and genetic data. Teachers also watched the ranch crew ultrasound heifers and bring bulls through the chute.

A trip to Valley Mills Vineyards tied viticulture to chemistry

through the wine making process. The teachers learned about growing grapes and how they use drip irrigation and grafting.

The teachers learned more about hydroponic food production systems and how education in soil science and agronomy can help their students pursue a similar career.

At Buzbee Feed and Seed, teachers learned how businesses in the community support farmers and ranchers. Topics like inflation and supply chain issues impacting the availability of products for farmers and ranchers were also covered.

## Hands-on workshops, activities

The group also participated in hands-on activities and lessons they can use in their classrooms, as well as learned from industry experts and fellow teachers.

In a session with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Entomologist Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown, the group learned more about insect classifications and life cycles. The lesson concluded with building insect habitats out of everyday objects. Brown noted these habitats can easily be incorporated into classrooms at a low cost by purchasing items at discount stores and having the students build them.

Teachers received a lesson on plant propagation in the classroom from the Junior Master Gardeners through AgriLife Extension. They participated in a variety of activities to learn more about propagation and seed germination that can be replicated in their classrooms.

The Texas Beef Council did a beef cuts demonstration by breaking down primal carcass cuts. They also held an interactive demonstration to connect



*Texas teachers spent four days learning about innovative and engaging ways to incorporate agriculture into their classrooms through Texas Farm Bureau's annual Summer Ag Institute.*



*Teachers heard from Jeff Chaffin (right) about how cattle are raised at W-4 Ranch. Teachers also watched the ranch crew check pregnancy on heifers with an ultrasound machine.*

the beef cattle industry from gate to plate. Then, teachers put on aprons to grill their dinner while learning more about culinary arts.

Other sessions included information from a forester, Texas Parks and Wildlife's Project Wild and a visit with a local veterinarian about antibiotics and animal welfare.

## Teacher experiences

Those from urban and rural areas alike enjoyed the immersive experience.

Katheryn Jimenez has taught at Northside ISD in San Antonio for 18 years. She's excited to take back the information she learned to her fourth-grade classroom.

"I don't just see farming as a business anymore," she said. "Now, I see it connected with the people. That helped me so much to see and meet farmers and ranchers. They are proud of what they do. They take it seriously, and they put a lot of love and care into what they do."

That's part of bridging the gap between urban and rural communities.

"As a teacher in an urban area, this was invaluable. The field experiences, meeting farmers and ranchers, hearing from the other presenters—all of it I can tie into what I teach in my fourth-grade classes," Jimenez said. "I

wouldn't have had the knowledge about agriculture without this experience, and I think it would be good for more urban teachers to come see what we did so that they can bring that back and hopefully get more kids interested in agriculture and learning about agriculture."

Even teachers like Tonya Lambright who have a background in agriculture found the lessons, ideas and activities beneficial.

"You don't realize how much

technology goes into running agriculture until you can go and actually visit with somebody on a farm or ranch," said Lambright, who teaches English Language Arts and Reading in sixth and eighth grade at Celeste ISD. "The one thing that excited me was you have a lot of kids who are into video games, and the spray rig at the dairy uses technology. If it goes down a path that has already been sprayed, it won't spray it again. I can tie that into video games.

Those kids who play video games, they don't realize there's an ag job out there for them."

There's room for agriculture in any subject and at any grade level. And for school districts like Waller ISD, where the population is growing rapidly, the need to bring agriculture to students in the classroom is important.

Laura Frey, a fourth-grade English Language Arts and Reading teacher, has a background in agriculture, but she learned more

ways to bring the subject to life in her classroom.

"Being a part of the farming and ranching industry myself, I wanted to really listen to new ideas and things like that. The dairy was something with the newest information for me," she said. "And I've made some life-long teaching connections."

For more information on TFB's Ag in the Classroom efforts and other educational opportunities, visit [texasfarmbureau.org/aitc](https://texasfarmbureau.org/aitc).



Check out some of the fun activities and lessons from Summer Ag Institute in this slideshow.

At Bentwood Dairy teachers learned about animal husbandry and nutrition where David and Jodi Jackson explained more about what cows eat.

**Let's Get Social**  
Connect with Texas Farm Bureau  
[@TexasFarmBureau](https://www.facebook.com/TexasFarmBureau)

f  
t  
i  
p  
You Tube  
in



## BATTERY POWER. MADE BY STIHL.

**One battery. Multiple tools.**

No matter the landscape challenge, STIHL has a battery-powered option to meet it.

**REAL STIHL**  
Find yours at [STIHLUSA.com](https://www.stihlusa.com)



Available at participating dealers. ©2022 STIHL 22STUSF2

# FARM FROM SCHOOL

## program reaches thousands of Texas Students

**By Julie Tomascik  
Editor**

This spring, young students across Texas visited farms and ranches from their classrooms and homes through Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) Farm From School program.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students met virtually with farmers and ranchers once a month using video conferencing technology.

More than 550 teachers and 12,600 students from home school, virtual and classroom settings connected with farmers and ranchers each month through the program.

During the monthly video meetings, the students got to know each farmer or rancher, learned about their operations and asked lots of questions along the way.

"Students learned a variety of things associated with the commodity that is featured each month," said Jordan Bartels, TFB associate director of Organization Division, Educational Outreach.

"More specifically, they learned about the science behind plant growth, technology used in agriculture, the needs of livestock and how they're cared for and other unique aspects of agriculture."

But even more importantly, students get to learn from real farmers and ranchers.

"Bringing agriculture to the classroom is so vital, and it is important that we're constantly finding a variety of ways to do that in a way that can reach all students," Bartels said. "Virtual visits allow students in all parts of the state to learn about agricultural commodities that might not be grown or raised where they live."

This semester, the students learned about hydroponic farms, Angora goats, planting and beef cattle.

"This program continues to grow each semester. It's become very apparent that teachers and students like having the opportunity to see things they can't easily

see during the school year," Bartels said. "While they might have one opportunity at an Ag Day or other field trips, this program offers multiple opportunities to see crops and livestock and to engage with different types of farmers and ranchers."

TFB also provides corresponding materials and resources that

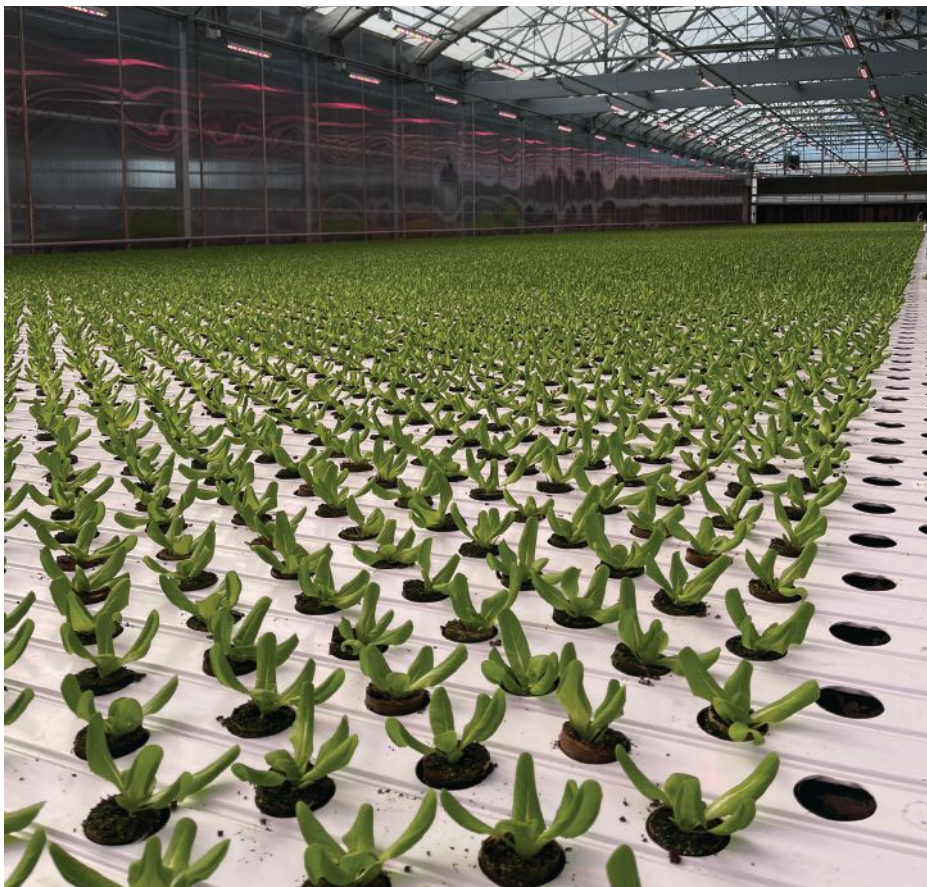
teachers can use to help relate the visits to concepts they're teaching in the classroom.

The popular program will be back again this fall. Teachers can sign up through Aug. 29.

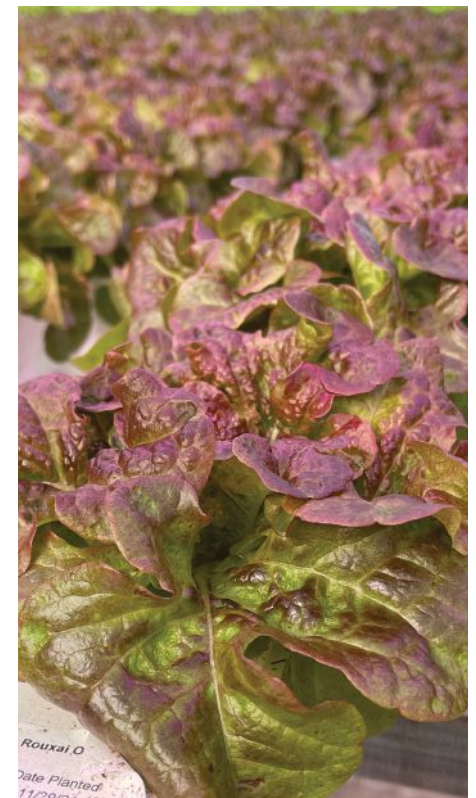
Visit [texasfarmbureau.org/aitc](https://texasfarmbureau.org/aitc) for more information and the latest announcements on TFB's Ag in the Classroom activities.



*Students learned about beef cattle production, animal care, and livestock handling from Central Texas ranchers Cody and Erika Archie.*



*Four varieties of lettuce are grown hydroponically at TrueHarvest Farms in Belton. The lettuce is harvested by hand and packaged at the facility before it's shipped to grocery stores and retailers across the state.*





*Melody Kneupper showed students how Angora goats are raised through the live Zoom visit. During the virtual farm visit, students also saw how the goats are sheared and learned what items mohair is used to make.*

*Garret Spigner in Denton County showed students how he plants corn and the technology he uses in the tractor while he's planting. Students asked questions about the different crops he grows and how long it takes him to finish planting.*

## Texas students can 'Farm From School' with Texas farmers this fall

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

This fall, young students across Texas can once again virtually visit farms and ranches right from their classrooms through Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) Farm From School program.

"The unique program allows teachers and students to hear and learn directly from Texas farmers and ranchers," said Jordan Bartels, TFB associate director of Organization Division, Educational Outreach. "Students get to see what's happening on farms and ranches in real time, and they can ask questions about what they see."

The program is back for its fourth semester. It is open to public, private and homeschool educators who teach kindergarten through fifth grade.

Each visit will feature a different commodity and farmer to showcase the diversity of Texas agriculture.

She also noted that agriculture can connect directly to what students are learning each day in their classrooms.

"Many students today are several generations removed from the farm, so there is a need to help students better understand where their food, fiber, fuel and

other items come from and how agriculture is science, math, social studies, STEM and so much more," Bartels said.

The unique program is popular in Texas schools. In the spring 2022 semester, nearly 600 teachers and over 10,300 students from public and private school classrooms and home school settings connected with farmers and ranchers each month through the program.

"Farm From School allows students to see what agriculture looks like across the state," Bartels said. "Some areas grow Christmas trees, and others have peanuts or pumpkins. Other farmers showcase aquaculture, hydroponics and so much more. Agriculture in Texas is so diverse, and this program allows students to see how so many commodities are grown that they may never have the opportunity to see outside of the grocery store."

Classrooms will connect virtually with the farmers and ranchers once a month from September through December. Student questions can be submitted via the chat function on the virtual platform during the visits.

"We encourage farmers and ranchers across the state to

share this program with teachers they may know," Bartels said. "After all, what better way to educate and engage young students about agriculture than to have them learn directly from a farmer or rancher?"

TFB will also provide TEKS-aligned lessons, activity books and other companion resource materials for the virtual farm visits.

Interested teachers can sign up on TFB's Agriculture in the Class-

room webpage at [texasfarmbureau.org/aitc](https://texasfarmbureau.org/aitc).

Sign up closes Aug. 29 for the fall semester.

Additional details about the program, including dates and commodities featured, will be added on the [Agriculture in the Classroom](https://texasfarmbureau.org/aitc) webpage as they become available.

For more information, contact Bartels at [edoutreach@txfb.org](mailto:edoutreach@txfb.org) or call 254-751-2569.

Texas Farm Bureau is bringing the farm to the classroom!

K-5 teachers can sign up to

**FARM FROM SCHOOL**

with Texas Farm Bureau in Fall 2022

Classes will meet virtually with a farmer once a month from September-December

Get program details and sign up by Aug. 29 at [texasfarmbureau.org/aitc](https://texasfarmbureau.org/aitc)

# Texas Farm Bureau offers new health coverage options to members

By Julie Tomascik  
Editor

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) members will have the opportunity to find more affordable health care options for themselves and their families.

Applications for the new Texas Farm Bureau Health Plans will be available beginning May 16, with the benefits taking effect June 1, 2022.

“Texas Farm Bureau has always been responsive to the needs of our members,” TFB President Russell Boening said. “We are proud to provide this option to our membership through Texas Farm Bureau Health Plans.”

The health plans include individual and family plans, as well as dental and vision coverage.

Each applicant will be individually rated based on their medical history. This can result in offering coverage for significantly less than can currently be found in the health care marketplace.

Finding affordable health care is a challenge for TFB members, many of whom are self-employed as farmers or ranchers.

“Farmers, ranchers, those who work on farms, agribusiness owners and workers, rural entrepreneurs and those who are small employers have told us it is difficult to access or afford traditional health plans,” Si Cook, TFB executive director and chief operating officer, said. “This is a way to help our members, reduce uninsured Texans, support rural hospitals and make sure rural communities have access to the same standards and services as other parts of the state.”

TFB was established to serve its members and offering these health plans is another opportunity to do so, Cook said.

“With members in all 254 counties, we already have the organizational structure in place to support



## The plans feature many standard health benefits, including:

- Office Visits
- Preventative, Routine and Wellness Services
- Outpatient and Rehabilitative Services
- Lab Work
- Emergency Room Services
- Maternity, Newborn and Pediatric Care
- Hospitalization
- Telemedicine
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling and Treatment
- Prescription Drug Benefits
- Dental and Vision Coverage

the sales and distribution of these plans,” Cook said. “The resources and structure of state Farm Bureaus across the nation have already proven this is a successful and viable model, and we know this can be a good option for TFB members who need alternative health care coverage other than what’s available to them today.”

The plans, which are a contractual agreement, will be overseen by a third-party administrator and will offer a grievance process

equal to the process required by the Affordable Care Act. Any person feeling aggrieved may file a complaint with the Texas attorney general.

“It is important to note that TFB Health Plans are not insurance and that coverage through our plans is only offered to members of our organization,” Cook said. “Creating TFB Health Plans was a team effort within the Farm Bureau family. It took a lot of hard work and determination, and we

are proud of the results.”

A bill, HB 3924, allowing TFB to use its statewide infrastructure to provide health plans to members was approved by the Texas Legislature last year. There were several lawmakers in support of the bill, showing the Legislature recognized the need for more options.

For more information on the health plans and to receive a quote, visit [www.tfbhealthplans.com](http://www.tfbhealthplans.com) or call 877-500-0140.



# HERE'S TO A DAY WELL DONE



## POLARIS® AG ADVANTAGE

As part of the Polaris® Ag Advantage program, get a 1-year promotional limited warranty on select 2022 full-size ATV models or a 2-year promotional limited warranty on select 2022 RANGER models.

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM



**COLUMBUS**  
CAVENDER POLARIS  
979-732-2353  
cavenderpolaris.com

**TAYLOR**  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC.  
512-352-6381  
wmcocoequip.com

WARNING: Polaris® off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and cab nets or doors (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2022 Polaris Inc.

**POLARIS | OFF ROAD**

# MIGHTY BIG VALUE.



**0% Financing\* or Cash Back\*\* available now!**

WORKMASTER™ 95/105/120 tractors are our most powerful and capable value utility tractors—and they're mighty good at whatever jobs you do. From haymaking to loader work, these 78- to 100-PTO-hp tractors are up to the challenge. Work with maximum power at just 1,800 rpm and get outstanding fuel efficiency. Choose an all-weather cab—it's best in class—or go with an all-purpose or low-profile ROPS. Enjoy the convenience of a clutchless 12x12 power shuttle and all the traction of 4WD.

Offers end December 31, 2022. Stop in today or visit [nhoffers.com](http://nhoffers.com).



<b>CROCKETT</b> COLLINS TRACTOR AND EQUIP. INC. 800-717-3157 collinstractorandequip- ment.com	<b>HONDO</b> WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC. 830-584-1576 wmcocoequip.com	<b>TAYLOR</b> WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC. 512-352-6381 wmcocoequip.com	<b>VICTORIA</b> VICTORIA FARM EQ. CO., INC. 361-573-2497 victoriafarmeq.com
--	--	---	---

\*For Commercial use only. Customer participation subject to credit qualification and approval by CNH Industrial Capital America LLC or CNH Industrial Capital Canada Ltd. See your participating New Holland dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Down payment may be required. Offer good through December 31, 2022. Not all customers or applicants may qualify for this rate or term. CNH Industrial Capital America LLC and CNH Industrial Capital Canada Ltd. standard terms and conditions apply. Canada Example: The interest rate will be 0% for 12 months. Total contract term is 12 months. Based on a retail contract date of March 1, 2022, with a suggested retail price on a new WORKMASTER™ 105 Tier 4, ROPS of \$592,579 customer provides down payment of \$518,515.79 and finances the balance of \$74,063.16 at 0% per annum for 12 months. There will be 12 equal monthly payments of \$6,171.93. The total amount payable will be \$74,063.16, which includes finance charges of \$0. Taxes, freight, setup, delivery, additional options or attachments not included in suggested retail price. Offer is nontransferable. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice. \*\*Cash back amounts vary and are applied at time of sale. Cash back offers are only available when financing purchase with CNH Industrial Capital America LLC or CNH Industrial Capital Canada Ltd. Offer ends December 31, 2022; subject to change or cancellation without notice. © 2022 CNH Industrial America LLC. All rights reserved. CNH Industrial Capital and New Holland are trademarks registered in the United States and many other countries, owned by or licensed to CNH Industrial N.V., its subsidiaries or affiliates.

From big to small.  
From farm to front yard.  
As a Farm Bureau® member,  
you're eligible to save.\*



Platinum 1 savings for  
Farm Bureau® Members.

John Deere Rewards is happy to announce that all Farm Bureau Members\* will automatically receive Platinum 1 status. That means instant savings on a wide range of John Deere products. To find out more on how you can turn your loyalty into savings, go to [JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau](http://JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau). Sign up today!

## Rewards

\*Must be a valid member of Farm Bureau for 30 days and have a valid email address to be eligible for John Deere Rewards benefits. John Deere's green and yellow color scheme, the leaping deer symbol, and JOHN DEERE are trademarks of Deere & Company.

**MARBLE FALLS**  
MUSTANG EQUIPMENT  
830-693-5414  
mustangequipment.com

**ROBSTOWN**  
KING RANCH AG & TURF  
361-387-2564  
kingranchagturf.com



**Farm Bureau®**  
Member Benefits



**811** Know what's below.  
811 before you dig.

The soil on your farm or ranch is rich with nutrients and minerals...  
**AND** underground pipelines.

**CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG**, in order to notify utility companies who will be affected by the excavation. The company will respond to your call and mark their facilities in your work area. This is a **FREE** service.

No one digs more dirt than America's Farmers and Ranchers. No matter if you're deep tilling, drain tiling, ditch cleaning or moving heavy loads. Understanding what's below ground will help you **DIG SAFELY**.

**CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG, EVERY TIME!!!!**



[www.commongroundalliance.com](http://www.commongroundalliance.com)  
[www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)



[www.kindermorgan.com/public\\_awareness](http://www.kindermorgan.com/public_awareness)



# Fields of Spring yield fruits, vegetables for Houston neighbors



**Mike Atkinson grows over 60 different vegetables year round on his family's fourth-generation farm outside of Houston.**

**By Julie Tomascik  
Editor**

From strawberries to blueberries and collards to kale, Mike Atkinson's fields yield a bountiful harvest for his Houston neighbors.

His farm in Spring, on the outskirts of Houston, thrives despite urban encroachment.

"When we came here in 1961, I'd tell everybody we're a mile-and-a-half from I-45, and we're the third house on the left. Now, we're the third million house on the left," he said. "There's not much farmland left. Farmland in Klein and Spring is all good farmland, and a lot of the good farmland in this part of the world is covered up with houses and concrete, roads, people and apartments."

But the houses upon houses in the surrounding subdivisions also bring opportunity for Mike and his family.

The fruits and vegetables they grow are sold to local restaurants and in a market on their farm. They also have strawberries and blueberries for families to come out and pick on their own.

"It's fun to see the families come out, and we do tours here all the time, too. A lot of times people really don't understand when they've lived in the concrete jungle

of Harris County, they don't understand what it's like to come to a farm. They think potatoes grow on a tree. They don't know carrots grow underneath the ground," Atkinson, a Harris County Farm Bureau member, said. "There's a lot of things that a lot of the inner-city people do not understand. It's a cultural shock to them when they come to the farm. They'll say they didn't know all of this took place so close to Houston."

In the spring, Atkinson grows strawberries and then transitions to tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers and squash, among others.

He grows broccoli, collards, mustard, turnips, kale, spinach, beets, radishes and many more vegetables in the fall.

Atkinson and his employees harvest everything by hand and deliver it to stores and restaurants in the area.

"We sell to 22, and we are really not looking to get any more. That's all we can do," he said. "We want to give real good service to the restaurants that we do have. That's a main thing. We're service-oriented."

It's a quick turnaround from field to local restaurants.

"What we harvest today, we'll

take to the restaurants first thing in the morning. Everything is picked today and sold tomorrow, and even a lot of times, it's picked today and sold today," he said.

But they are working to transition to more u-pick and agritourism opportunities, as well as the on-farm market, and away from the bulk wholesale produce.

They started the market in 2004.

"It was my wife's idea," he said. "Every year, it's kind of gotten bigger and bigger."

Expanding the on-farm market and u-pick options will offer some flexibility to Atkinson and his crew.

"We're leaning to get a little more from the bulk wholesale produce into the u-pick and the

agritourism part of people coming here directly to the farm and purchasing stuff here," he said. "It's easier for us. We don't have to worry about driving down the road and going anywhere. We can get a lot more done in a day's time if we're here at the farm."

And with the increasing costs for fuel, fertilizer and seed, Atkinson is looking for ways to maximize his productivity.

Last year, Atkinson paid about \$450-\$500 a ton for fertilizer.

"Now, it's over \$1,200 a ton. It's tripled in price," he said.

And fuel costs are climbing, too.

"Last year, we were running through \$2,000 worth of fuel a month, and now we're running through \$5,000 worth of fuel a



**Atkinson and his employees harvest the crops by hand and then deliver to local restaurants.**



*The Atkinsons grow a variety of vegetables, including cabbage and kale.*

month,” he said. “We’re doing the same thing. We’re not doing any more. It’s just the cost has gone up, and anything that we have to get shipped in here to use is just an astronomical amount in freight.”

But despite the challenges that urban sprawl and increased production costs bring, Atkinson

doesn’t want to do anything else other than farm.

“It’s all I’ve ever done. I don’t know what it’d be like to do anything else,” he said. It’s hard, but like I say, that’s all I’ve ever done. I won’t ask anybody who works for me to do anything that I haven’t done. I guess in business, no mat-

ter what, you got to start out at the bottom and work your way to the top. This day in time, I’d rather be out here harvesting by hand. I don’t care how hot it is. I don’t care what we’re picking—cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelons. I don’t care what it is. I’d rather be out there than all the other stuff that

I have to deal with on a daily basis about getting fertilizer, ordering this, taking care of this, writing this, going there, doing this.”

To put it simply, Atkinson likes being a farmer, and his Houston neighbors and customers appreciate what he brings to their tables.



*The Atkinsons offer u-pick strawberries and blueberries. They also host tours to help their Houston neighbors connect to agriculture.*



*The vegetables are delivered fresh to local restaurants.*

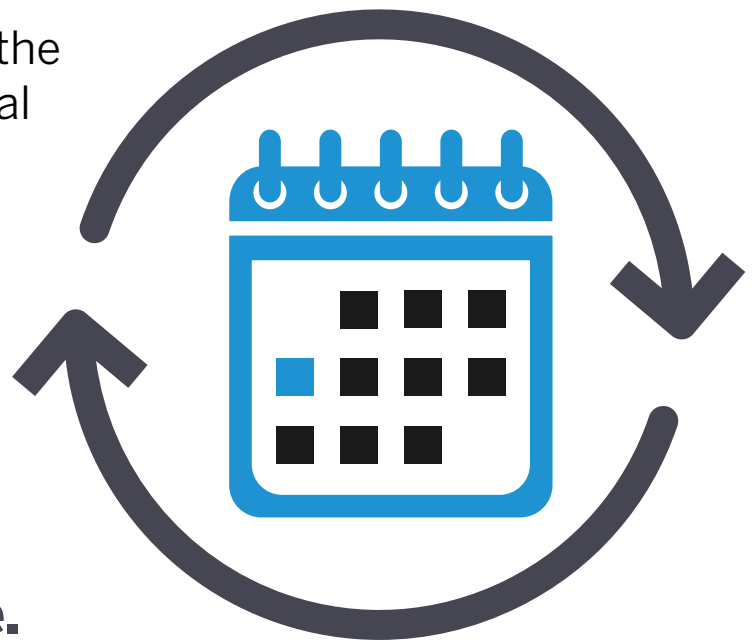


*Atkinson Farms is surrounded by homes in Spring, which is a suburb of Houston. Mike Atkinson farms with his wife, Theresa, and their son, Bobby.*

# Automatic TFB membership payments now available

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) members now have the option to setup a recurring draft for their annual membership dues using a checking or savings account.

**Members may enroll by logging into their MyTFB account at [my.texasfarmbureau.org](https://my.texasfarmbureau.org) or by contacting their county Farm Bureau for details and assistance.**



Members are not charged a payment processing fee when enrolled in the program, and members have the option to voluntarily contribute or not contribute to TFB AGFUND with their annual recurring membership payment.

Members can enroll, make changes or deactivate enrollment through their MyTFB account. They can also contact their county Farm Bureau.

Members enrolled no longer receive a paper membership renewal billing. All membership renewal notifications are sent via email. Members enrolled may access their membership card through MyTFB.

For more information, members should contact their county Farm Bureau office.



**TEXAS FARM BUREAU<sup>®</sup>**



Farm Bureau®

## EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS FOR FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

**0% FINANCING AVAILABLE\***  
on all new Farmall® series tractors

PLUS

**\$200 FARM BUREAU DISCOUNT\*\***

- Farmall compact A series
- Farmall compact C series
- Farmall utility A series
- Farmall utility C series
- Farmall utility U series
- Farmall 100A series
- Farmall N series
- Farmall V series

Print your certificate today!† Visit <http://www.texasfarmbureau.org/>

**ABILENE**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT AND SPRAY CENTER  
800-588-7100  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**EDINBURG**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT & SPRAY CENTER  
800-514-9381  
[www.wyliesprayers.com](http://www.wyliesprayers.com)

**LUBBOCK**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
800-722-4001  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**PLAINVIEW**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
855-293-4116  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**SEMINOLE**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
888-758-1181  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**TAYLOR**  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC.  
512-352-6381  
[www.wmcoequip.com](http://www.wmcoequip.com)

**AMARILLO**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
855-335-2861  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**HONDO**  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC.  
830-584-1576  
[www.wmcoequip.com](http://www.wmcoequip.com)

**MUNDAY**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
800-338-2401  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**RAYMONDVILLE**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT & SPRAY CENTER  
956-689-2137  
[www.wyliesprayers.com](http://www.wyliesprayers.com)

**SPEARMAN**  
FIVE STAR EQUIPMENT INC.  
806-659-3743  
[www.fivestarequipmenttx.com](http://www.fivestarequipmenttx.com)

**VICTORIA**  
HLAVINKA EQUIPMENT CO.  
361-541-6100  
[www.hlavinka.com](http://www.hlavinka.com)

**EAST BERNARD**  
HLAVINKA EQUIPMENT CO.  
800-460-7528  
[www.hlavinka.com](http://www.hlavinka.com)

**LAMESA**  
WYLIE IMPLEMENT  
877-308-9685  
[www.wylieimplement.com](http://www.wylieimplement.com)

**NOME**  
HLAVINKA EQUIPMENT CO.  
409-253-2244  
[www.hlavinka.com](http://www.hlavinka.com)

**ROBSTOWN**  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY EQ. CO. INC.  
361-387-1572  
[www.wmcoequip.com](http://www.wmcoequip.com)

**SULPHUR SPRINGS**  
FARM COUNTRY, INC.  
903-885-7561  
[www.farmcountry-inc.com](http://www.farmcountry-inc.com)

\* For commercial use only. Customer participation subject to credit qualification and approval by CNH Industrial Capital America LLC. See your participating Case IH dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Down payment may be required. Offer good through December 31, 2022. Not all customers or applicants may qualify for this rate or term. CNH Industrial Capital America LLC standard terms and conditions will apply. This transaction will be unconditionally interest free. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice.

\*\* Offer available through December 31, 2022. Available on new Case IH Farmall tractors. This offer may be combined with other offers, but is not valid on prior purchases. A valid Farm Bureau® Membership Certificate is required, which may be obtained at [fbverify.com/case](http://fbverify.com/case). See your participating Case IH dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Not available in all states. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice. FARM BUREAU, the letters FB, the FB National Logo, and the State Farm Bureau Logo are service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation used under license by Case IH.

† A current Farm Bureau membership verification certificate must be presented to the Case IH dealer in advance of product delivery to receive the incentive discount.

©2022 CNH Industrial America LLC. All rights reserved. Case IH and CNH Industrial Capital are trademarks registered in the United States and many other countries, owned by or licensed to CNH Industrial N.V., its subsidiaries or affiliates.



# THE VOICE OF TEXAS AGRICULTURE

They say everything's bigger in Texas. That's why we pledge to empower Texans—from farmers and ranchers to everyone in between—with a big voice. We're over 535,000 member-families strong.

Our mission is to be the Voice of Texas Agriculture.

Our vision is for all Texans to benefit from a prosperous agriculture that provides for a viable, long-term domestic source of food, fiber and fuel.

For more information, visit

**[WWW.TEXASFARMBUREAU.ORG](http://WWW.TEXASFARMBUREAU.ORG)**.