

# Texas farmers connect with food influencers

In April, two Texas farmers set out to tell their own farm stories — seeking conversations about the food they grow and how they produce it in the state’s first coordinated CommonGround effort. Bobbie Black and Ashley Pool, Muleshoe farmers alongside their husbands, spoke with attendees at the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Annual Conference and Exhibition in Arlington, Texas, April 27-28.

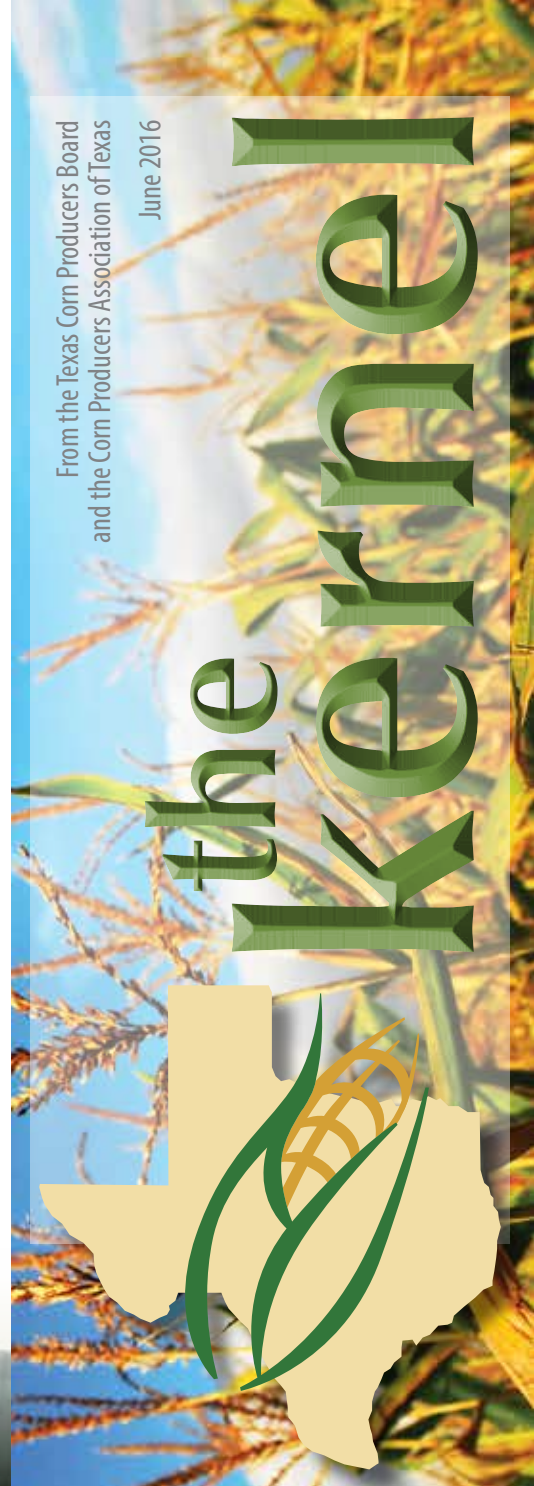
CommonGround is a group of farmers having conversations about the food they grow and how they produce it. The farmer volunteers that make up this grassroots organization share their personal experiences, as well as science and research, to help consumers and food influencers sort through the myths and misinformation surrounding food and farming.

Black and Pool are two of seven Texas farmers who volunteer for this effort. The pair had the opportunity to visit with nutritionists, dieticians and students from across the state – at a conference that boasted an attendance of nearly 800.

“At the start of the exhibition, we presented an industry briefing to the attendees – explaining who we are and that we are here to be a resource to them,” Black said. “From there, we were available throughout the show hours to visit with participants about how we farm, and discuss how we make choices on our farm so we can produce a quality product we’re comfortable using for our own families.”

Tackling issues many see in headlines every day was a common theme throughout the 2-day event.

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# CORNer Comments



**David Gibson**  
**TCPB Executive Director**  
**CPAT Exec. Vice President**

With a new crop year underway, I just want to remind you of an insurance issue considering the rains and hail that have occurred across the state.

claim filed. It is very important that it be done correctly to ensure the payment of a claim and to stay in compliance with your insurance pol-

**If you have your crop insured and suffer a loss, be sure to contact your insurance agent before taking any actions to destroy the remaining crop...**

**-David Gibson**

If you have your crop insured and suffer a loss, be sure to contact your insurance agent before taking any actions to destroy the remaining crop in order to adequately have your insurance

icy and farm bill compliance. Insurance-related questions should be directed to your insurance agent, or you can call Texas Corn Producers at 806.763.CORN (2676) and we will assist you. 🌽

Spring is certainly an exciting and busy time of the year; crops are planted with substantial investment in machinery, technology, genetics, crop protection materials and fertilizer with the hope of cooperative weather. Each year brings a unique set of challenges and rewards. A considerable amount of corn had to be replanted in the Central Texas growing area, which rarely occurs. It wasn't particular to having been

planted too early; the common theme seemed to be fields that didn't drain well and exceptionally cool temperatures. I've heard a lot of growers say, "Bad start, good finish." The optimist in me says time will tell.

I hope your operation has a safe and successful season. Please contact TCPB if there is an issue you feel we need to address. 🌽



**Scott Averhoff**  
**TCPB Chairman**  
**Waxahachie, Texas**

## Stay Connected Online !

CPAT is watching several policies and regulations closely right now, and anticipates comment periods opening up this summer. Stay up to date on these issues and more by subscribing to *Stalk Talk eNews*, visiting [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org), and following TCP on social media.

## Board elections, committees, issues highlight of spring meetings

The spring meetings of the Texas Corn Producers Board and the Corn Producers Association of Texas held in San Antonio were packed with board discussions and actions on numerous efforts for the organizations to best serve the state's corn farmers.

### Checkoff Board

TCPB, which is funded by a voluntary state checkoff, discussed a variety of matters, from the evaluation of state research funds to new and expanding promotional efforts on behalf of farmers.

Beyond the "normal business" of TCPB's board, directors elected or re-elected to board seats in the 2016 election were sworn in by the Texas Department of Agriculture. **Braden Gruhlkey** of Randall County joined the board this year, and **Max Swinburn** of Castro County, **Jimmy Wedel** of Lubbock County, **Bruce Wetzel** of Grayson County, and **Wesley Valerius** of Cameron County were re-elected to continue in their board positions.

Additionally, the checkoff board re-elected **Scott Averhoff** of Ellis County as chairman. TCPB elected **Daniel Berglund** of Wharton County as vice chairman, **Aaron**



(pictured l-r) Wesley Valerius, Jimmy Wedel, Bruce Wetzel, Braden Gruhlkey and Max Swinburn were sworn onto the TCPB board by TDA

**Martinka** of Milam County as secretary, and **Mark Howard** of Dallam County as treasurer.

Committee chairmen and members for the next two years were also slated at this meeting. Committee chairmen were selected as follows:

- Advertising, Promotion and Education Committee Chairman **Jimmy Wedel** of Lubbock County
- Finance Committee Chairman **Mark Howard** of Dallam County
- Issues Committee Chairman **Dee Vaughan** of Moore County
- Research Committee Chairman **Charles Ring** of San Patricio County

### Association Board

CPAT, which is supported by individual memberships, discussed many regulations, policies and other issues Tex-

as corn farmers are currently facing, or that may be coming down the pipeline.

Among such timely issues, was an update on Cuban trade, which the association board voted to support.

CPAT members serving on the National Corn Growers Association's action teams, also gave updates on their respective teams' national

meetings. **Aaron Martinka** of Milam County reported on the Grower Services Action Team, **Joe Reed** of Swisher County gave an update on the Public Policy Action Team, and **Susie Spurlock** of Sherman County submitted a written update on the national CornPAC.

A meeting highlight was Bee County Farmer **Jim Sugarek's** report of the recent Production and Stewardship Action Team's meeting, which largely focused on pollinators. Sugarek offered insight on the growing issue of diminishing pollinator populations – particularly bee populations. He reviewed the importance of pollinator task forces at both a national and state level to ensure farmers' interests are considered in addressing the matter.

Both boards will be holding August meetings in Lubbock.

# THE VOICE: Association News

*A note from the President...*

I was just thinking about the feral hog problem and its effect on corn producers in Texas. Every year it is a bigger problem.

I have significant damage in four fields, and one of my neighbors has had 400 acres completely destroyed.

It is affecting most growers in a large swath of the state. We keep hearing of future solutions, but we need a solution sooner rather than later. The acreage affected by hog damage is increasing annually, and

producers are electing to plant crops other than corn for this reason.

Please discuss your concerns with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension personnel and/or the Texas Department of Agriculture anytime you get the opportunity. Corn Producers Association of Texas personnel can provide contact information.



**Bruce Wetzel**  
**CPAT President**  
**Sherman, Texas**

## EPA's proposed 2017 Renewable Volume Obligation disappointing

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its proposed Renewable Volume Obligations (RVO) under the Renewable Fuel Standard last month.

Much to the disappointment of farmers in Texas and across the United States, the ethanol level proposed is below statute.

In the proposal, the non-advanced or "conventional" fuels portion, which includes corn-based ethanol, is set to 14.8 billion gallons in 2017. Though this is an increase from this year's 14.5 billion gallons, it is still well below the 15 billion gallons in statute.

a more positive direction, it's disheartening to see the agency propose levels below statute for a policy that is making our air cleaner, creating jobs, and boosting rural business," Bruce Wetzel, the president of Corn Producers Association of Texas (CPAT) and a Grayson County farmer, said. "This would be a blow to our environment, our economy, and our energy security."

The proposal is unprecedented, particularly given significant strides by all sectors of the renewable fuels industry to making this clean-burning fuel economically and physically accessible to

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*EPA has again proposed conventional ethanol levels below statute*

## CommonGround, continued

“Many people visited with us about the ‘hot button’ issues you see across the internet and TV,” Pool said. “What’s great about the CommonGround effort, is we’re just real people – real farmers – talking about what it is we do every day. Whether it was GMOs, organic and local foods, food safety or animal welfare we simply discuss what we do on our farm and why we do it.”

CommonGround is funded by U.S. corn and soybean checkoff dollars, and as such does not promote any one farming practice or method over another. Volunteers for the effort across the nation agree to approach every conversation in an inclusive,

positive, credible and real manner.

Texas CommonGround has several more events planned for later this year, and state volunteers have already presented at several events across the state.

Find out more about CommonGround at [FindOurCommonGround.com](http://FindOurCommonGround.com). Female farmers interested in joining the conversation and being a part of CommonGround can contact Texas Corn Producers at [info@texascorn.org](mailto:info@texascorn.org) or 806.763.CORN (2676).



*(pictured l-r) CommonGround Volunteers Ashley Pool and Bobbie Black presented and visited with key food influencers about how food is produced*

## TCP engages with grain buyers

Each spring grain buyers from across the state gather for the annual Texas Grain and Feed Association conference. This year’s event was held in April in Fort Worth.

Texas Corn Producers is a longtime supporter of the conference, having sponsored various parts of the program and participated in the exhibition. This year was no different, as TCP staff attended the event to discuss issues for Texas farmers and TCP’s efforts on behalf of the customers of this important sector.

“Having presence at this

event is vital for our organization,” Hallie Bertrand, an industry relations staff person with TCP, said. “It’s an excellent opportunity for us to visit with grain buyers about the obstacles our farmers are facing, and build a support system to call on when needed.”

Additionally, Elsie Wetzel was the keynote for the TGFA Women in Ag breakfast.

Wetzel, a Texas farmer, wife, mother and teacher, discussed the need for agricultural advocates. She visited with attendees about the importance for farmers — male

and female — to engage with consumers to regain their trust in farming and how their food is produced.

Wetzel saw the overwhelming amount of misinformation and myths about farming and food that consumers are faced with, and was the first Texas farmer to join the CommonGround effort. Since joining the grassroots effort, Wetzel has worked to have conversations about food and farming with consumers in her community, online and across the state.

# Support Texas agriculture and enjoy time in the putting greens

Green is the color of a healthy corn crop, putting greens, and cash prizes. These are all items one can find at the Corn Producers Association of Texas' 5th Annual Corn Cob Classic benefiting the Texas CornPAC.

The event will be held Saturday, August 6. Check-in beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the Plainview Country Club in Plainview, Texas. With a two-person scramble tournament play, hole contests, and tournament favors, there will be plenty of green going around. Registration is \$150 and includes cart, hole contests, tournament favors, a complimentary meal, and many opportunities to win cash prizes.



To register for the tournament, contact the Plainview Country Club Pro Shop at 806.293.2445. The course can provide golf carts, as needed.

The Texas CornPAC supports legislators who help defend agriculture at both the state and national level. The Texas CornPAC enables CPAT to strengthen relationships with policy makers,

ensure representatives know contributors are farmers, and influence policy to ensure a future for Texas farmers and an integral part of the state's economy.

The Texas CornPAC is handled by the CPAT, which is the advocacy arm of Texas corn farmer representation – actively giving farmers a voice at a regional, state and national level.

CPAT supporters unable to attend the event that would still like to give to the Texas CornPAC can mail contributions to Texas CornPAC, 4205 N. Interstate 27, Lubbock, Texas 79403.\*

\*According to FEC rules, corporate account contributions cannot be accepted. Texas Corn PAC contributions must be paid for with a personal check. Voluntary contributions may be accepted from any U.S. citizen. However, solicitation for contributions is limited to CPAT memberships.

## Renewable Volume Obligation, continued from p. 4

both the average consumer and the fuel industry. Over the past year, the ethanol industry and corn farmers have invested millions of dollars, along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership, to accelerate public and private investment in new ethanol pumps and fuel infrastructure.

EPA will hold a public hearing on this proposal on June 9 in Kansas City, Mo. The period for public input and comment will be open until July 11. The rule is expected to be

finalized by Nov. 30.

CPAT, as well as its state and national counterparts, is working to hold the government accountable: calling on EPA to follow the law and raise the ethanol volume to statute. The association, which is the advocacy arm for Texas corn farmers, encourages Texans to submit comments to the EPA encouraging the same.

"This policy goes beyond our farmers and rural communities," CPAT Executive Vice President David Gibson said. "Support needs to

be realized and voiced from the farmer in the field to the consumer at the pump to the executive in the downtown office. This policy is making air cleaner for us and our children, and setting our country up for success economically and environmentally for our children's children. Everyone has a stake in this."

For more information on the announcement, visit <http://1.usa.gov/1U0b2R4>.

CPAT will be updating its website, [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org), with resources and additional information.

# ODDS *AND* ENDS



## Field to Fork photo contest

Texas Corn Producers is calling photographers to 'freeze frame' time and help elaborate, through photos, the story of corn farming in Texas with a TCP Field-to-Fork photo contest offering the opportunity to win cash prizes.

This contest is intended for Texas residents to grab their cameras and start snapping photos to be entered into one of the following categories:

- Corn Fields and Farm

Landscape

- Corn Planting and Harvesting
- On The Farm (farmers, family and children)

All interested participants can submit one entry per category now until Nov. 30, 2016.

The contest is open to all Texas residents, including Corn Producers Association of Texas members, and offers an opportunity for contestants to earn prizes of:

- \$200 grand prize
- \$100 cash for first place in each category
- \$50 Cabela's gift card for runners-up in each category

So get creative! Upload photos to Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram and don't forget to hashtag #TCP-PhotoContest. Don't forget to email original images to [intern@texascorn.org](mailto:intern@texascorn.org).

Visit [TexasCorn.org](http://TexasCorn.org) for complete contest rules.

## Bartek joins TCP team

Taylor Bartek is joining Texas Corn Producers staff full time as the organization's administrative coordinator.

Bartek is a recent graduate of Texas Tech University with a degree in agricultural communications. She began her collegiate career at Tarleton State University.

Until now, Bartek served as an administrative intern with TCP since spring 2015.

Her passion for agriculture comes from growing up in a small ranching and farming community. Bartek is excited for her next chapter with the organization and serving the state's farmers.



## TCP welcomes new intern

Lindsay Hamer recently joined the TCP staff as its new staff assistant intern - assisting membership, industry relations and administrative staff and learning more about the corn industry.

Hamer is from the small town of Saint Hedwig, Texas. She is currently studying ag-

ricultural communications at Texas Tech University. Hamer is a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and is a recruiter for the College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources. She loves to be active and involved around her community. She is excited to be going into her junior

year at Texas Tech this fall and looks forward for what the future has in store.

Hamer is looking forward to learning about the corn industry and getting hands on experience in the communications field as well.

# Directors

Scott Averhoff, *Ellis Co.*

Daniel Berglund, *Wharton Co.*

Robert Gordon, *Dallam Co.*

Braden Gruhlkey, *Randall Co.*

Mark Howard, *Dallam Co.*

Aaron Martinka, *Milam Co.*

Larry Mason, *Dallam Co.*

Joe Reed, *Swisher Co.*

Charles Ring, *San Patricio Co.*

Wesley Spurlock, *Sherman Co.*

Max Swinburn, *Castro Co.*

Bart Thoreson, *Hansford Co.*

Wesley Valerius, *Cameron Co.*

Dee Vaughan, *Moore Co.*

Jimmy Wedel, *Bailey Co.*

Bruce Wetzel, *Grayson Co.*

Steve Yoder, *Dallam Co.*

## Staff

**David Gibson**

*Executive Director*

**Stephanie Pruitt**

*Communications Director*

**Taylor Bartek**

*Administrative Coord.*

**Kaci Bearden**

*Business & Finance Coord.*

**Hallie Bertrand**

*Industry Relations*

**Angie Martin**

*Industry Relations*

**Landee Kieschnick**

*Communications Assistant*

**Lindsay Hamer**

*Staff Assistant*

## Upcoming Events

**July 4, 2016**

TCP Office Closed for  
Independence Day

**August 6, 2016**

Corn Cob Classic  
*Plainview, Texas*

**July 11-15, 2016**

CPAT Legislative Visits  
*Washington, D.C.*

**Even more events at:**

**[www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org)**

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member at [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org)



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