

Getting lost in a Texan heritage

Brazos Valley Maize in Washington County

As autumn sweeps through the air, many Texans grab a coat and a friend to make their way to corn mazes across the state. The maize fields are filled with echoes of laughter, a sound Art Free knows well.

Free and his brothers, Jody and J. Loye, are owners of the Brazos Valley Maize, a corn maze in Washington County. They share responsibilities of the operation with their entire family, including the sibling's wives parents and children.

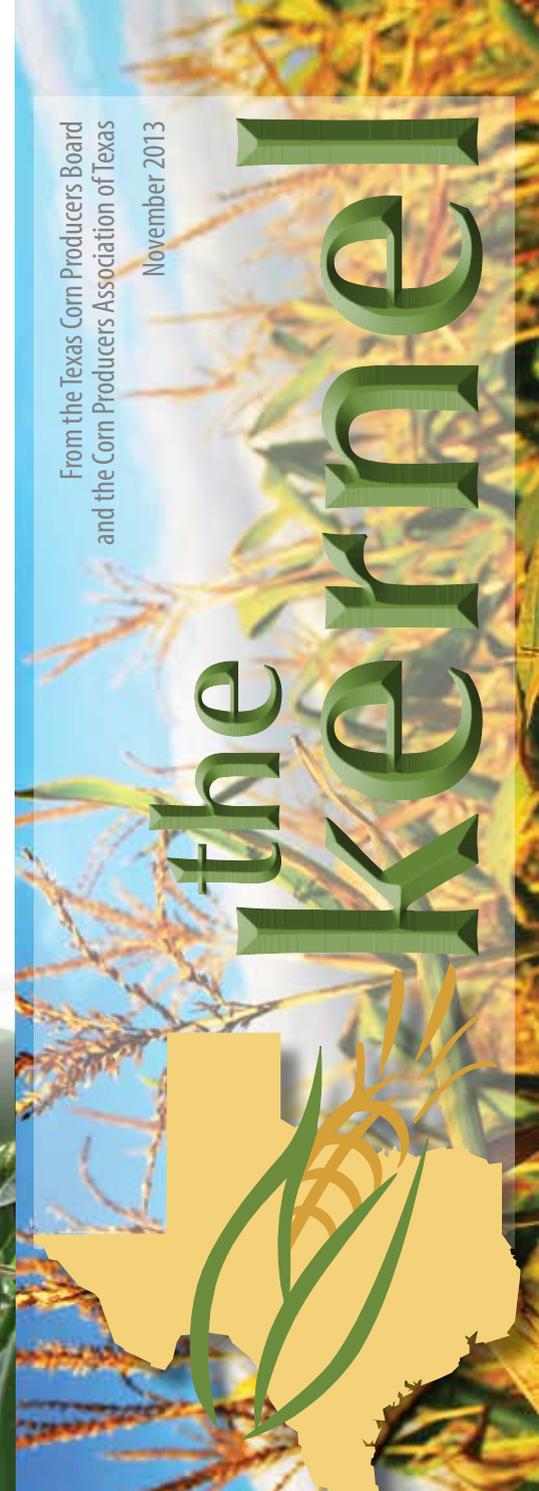
Free is a sixth generation Texan, with roots back to the

1830s in Washington County. He and his family saw the value in sharing their rich agricultural culture to all visitors of the maze.

“Our maze is built on our grandparents’ original property,” Free said. “As people came out, we would share the history of our grandparents’ farm in passing.”

Due to such interest in the maze and family history, Free and his siblings chose to host a dedicated Farm Heritage Day Nov. 30. This event will be in addition to the Brazos Valley Maize’s regular attractions, including a 6-acre corn

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From the Texas Corn Producers Board
and the Corn Producers Association of Texas
November 2013

the kernel

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CORNER Comments



David Gibson
TCPB Executive Director
CPAT Exec. Vice President

One of the most variable years for Texas producers is winding to a close. Texas as a whole will produce a corn

crop that will come close to a record number for the state due to increased planted acres, not record yields. This said, some producers in the state still had a disastrous year due to the lack of rain.

As plans are made for the 2014 crop, soil moisture is still short in nearly all of the state. Late season rains in portions of South and Central Texas have allowed slight improvements in the soil moisture. However, significant moisture throughout the fall and winter is needed to increase soil moisture profiles to a level where producers can enter the planting season with confidence that will encourage them to plant as many acres as in 2014.

The next factor growers are facing is lower prices for grain in 2014. The increased acreage of corn nationwide is leading to a larger carry-over in the supplies of grain, and this will continue to put pressure on the grain market to stay at the mid \$4 per bushel range throughout 2014. This will be a major factor in the decisions that will be made pertaining to what crops are planted this next season. For many producers, prices at this level will be very close to what it cost for them to produce a bushel of corn. If market signals don't change, I expect to see some decrease in corn planted acreage, not only in Texas, but nationwide.

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It never ceases to amaze me how misguided (or well funded) groups continually denigrate biotechnology without scientific merit. To my knowledge, there has never been a single documented case of illness or death resulting from consuming foods produced from biotech aka genetically modified organism (GMO) crops. Claims that foods from biotech crops are not nutritionally equivalent to non-biotech crops are without scientific merit.

Corn is one of the leading crops that has benefitted from the incorporation of biotech traits. It has allowed corn to not only increase geographi-

cal adaptation and increased yield, but also reduced use of crop protection materials lending to reduced environmental impact.

With an ever increasing global population and a finite amount of productive land, it is increased yield that will continue to provide an abundance of available food. We are fortunate to live in an era of available technological benefit.

TCPB's objective is to increase the profitability of Texas corn growers through research, education and promotion. If there is an area you feel needs addressed, please make us aware. 🌽



Scott Averhoff
TCPB Chairman
Waxahachie, Texas

Brazos Valley Maize, *continued*



*Brothers share farm history through agritourism.
Pictured: (l-r) Art, Jody and J.Loye*

maze, corn cannon, hayride, cow train, and mini hay bale maze for the younger crowd.

“This is a day to honor our past and agriculture,” Free said. “It is truly what made America great.”

The Farm Heritage Day will feature the Texas Draft Horse and Mule Association. The association will present live demonstrations of plow-horses and mules to attendees. The Sharecroppers Antique Farm Equipment Club, an affiliate of the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association, will also showcase antique tractors and machinery to the public.

In addition to these learning opportunities, the Texas Corn Producers is providing corn activity books and educational resources for distribution to schools attending the Farm Heritage Day. These items will allow

teachers to take agricultural learning materials back to their classroom. The activity book features science, math, reading and art activities.

Free said he believes it is important to teach students the evolution of the farm. A resource such as corn activity books also gives teachers the tools to give children insight into how they are a part of agriculture.

Farm Heritage Day guests are able to purchase tickets for a chuckwagon breakfast and supper, to further experience farming culture.

Free said the information that will be shared with guests focuses on Washington County’s true history. Growing up in the area, Free said much of the agricultural visibility has disappeared.

“We use to have 158 dairy farms here when I was in high school,” Free said. “Now we have none.”

Free said it is important to keep the agricultural heritage alive not only in Washington County, but across our nation.

Free and his family plan to host Farm Heritage Days each season. He hopes to continue to gain more support from agricultural-based organizations through the years.

“This is what made our country,” Free said. “Family farms that hung through those hard times.”



THE VOICE: Association News

A note from the President...

We still don't have a farm bill, but we are closer than we have been any time in the past two years when this process all began. My predictions continue to come true, as I have accurately predicted that Congress will not pass a new farm bill in each of my previous newsletters this past year. However, I am going to bet on a different horse this time, as conferees have been appointed by both House and Senate agriculture committees, and at least talks between the two have begun. Thus, there is a reasonable chance that a farm bill might be voted on by the end of this year. Having said that, I am still somewhat suspicious that the committee differences might derail the whole process, and we end up with another extension.



House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.), who also chairs the conference committee, and thus wields a powerful stick, has stated there are three main differences that the two committees will have to contend with. The first pertains to differences in the commodity title and what type of safety net options are available for farmers: crop insurance, price protection and/or shallow loss revenue. The second area of contention is the dairy title and its supply control mechanism. The third is the food stamp program, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which the House wants to cut \$40 billion, and the Senate has proposed only a \$4 billion cut. These differences are both political and regional, and reaching a compromise that will pass both houses and pass muster with the White House is going to be a huge task, particularly with the limited number of legislative days remaining this year.

The Renewable Fuel Standard continues to come under attack, especially the latest efforts in a bill filed in the Senate by Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), to remove corn ethanol from the RFS. Also, the petroleum industry has been lobbying hard with press releases and social media, trying to persuade the American public that ethanol and the



Jimmy Wedel
CPAT President
Muleshoe, Texas

RFS are not needed. Please let your congressman know that the RFS is important for America and American farmers.

Harvest season is virtually complete across the entire state, and significant rainfall has come to many parts of the state. However, the High Plains region remains extremely dry. Due to the recent government shutdown, accurate harvest numbers are not available, but most corn producers across the state have reported improved yields over the past two drought-stricken years.

As the holiday season is fast approaching, I hope that everyone takes time to offer thanks for this year's harvest, and has a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. 🍀

New corn farmer sees benefit of crop

Farmers across the state all work toward a goal to produce healthy, productive and profitable crops. With such an abundance of choices in the field crop industry, how do you choose the right one?

Many farmers in Texas believe they have the answer through corn. Others, including Matt Wilmeth, are trying out the field crop and learning first hand the benefits of growing corn.

Wilmeth planted his first crop in 1985 while he attended Texas Tech University and pursued his degree in agricultural education. However, it wasn't until this year that the Crosby County farmer planted his first 200 acres of corn.

Wilmeth needed a high residue crop to rotate with his cotton. His interest in the crop sparked while he watched his neighbor grow corn. Corn's higher market price also played a role in Wilmeth's decision to give the commodity a shot at his own hand.

Wilmeth planted his crop early. Unfortunately, factors did not weather in his favor, causing Wilmeth to replant corn in May. The farmer knew the risk for freeze damage by planting early, but did not expect such a late freeze this year.

"This isn't the first time I have lost a crop," Wilmeth said as he reflected on his experience in the field. "I'm still learning."

Wilmeth's second attempt in the corn field resulted in a successful crop yielding 194.5 bu/a.

Typically, Wilmeth focuses his farming efforts in cotton and grain sorghum, along with managing a small herd of cattle. Pursuing corn was a risk that turned into a great experience.

Wilmeth said his challenges were not above other challenges he faces with his traditional crops. He noted he learned corn is somewhat easier in its early stages to grow than cotton.

"There are alternate chemicals to help with weed resistance issues," Wilmeth said. "And corn grows quickly enough that you do not have to continue to fight weeds all season."

Growing corn is not the only time Wilmeth has tried something new. The farmer was approached with the opportunity to work as a loan officer. Ten years later, he continues to balance farming and his career at Vista Bank where he serves as vice president for the bank's Idalou location.

"I had to learn to be on top of things and to be timely," Wilmeth noted. "It was important for me to be prepared ahead of time."

These skills are something Wilmeth has passed on to his son Connor, who is both a farmer and a student at Texas Tech. Wilmeth said he has to balance his schoolwork and farming.

"He is on his second crop," Wilmeth said. "He wants to come back and farm after graduation."

Wilmeth said his son has a great attitude about agriculture, and enjoyed helping him grow corn this year.

"I think in the future he will grow corn," Wilmeth said. "Especially as it appears that we will have varieties requiring less water."

Wilmeth noted these attitudes are what empower farmers to try new things in and out of the field. His positive attitude toward producing corn paid off. The farmer learned invaluable skills along with the value of the commodity.

"Between cattle feeding, ethanol and food consumption, there are many uses for corn," Wilmeth said. "It is very important to our economy and country." 🌽



Dec. 4
Amarillo, Texas

Don't miss the thirteenth annual

Texas Commodity Symposium

Director Spotlight

Dee Vaughan and his wife Terri, farm in the Texas Panhandle, raising corn, seed sorghum, commercial sorghum, soybeans, wheat and other various grains for seed.

Vaughan currently serves on TCPB and CPAT, and serves as chairman of the Issues Committee. He is active in both organizations and has set goals for each.

“The only reason for TCPB or CPAT to exist is to create economic benefits for Texas corn producers,” Vaughan says, “it is my goal to help identify and work on projects or issues that yield the greatest economic return to the Texas corn producers for the money invested in either the checkoff program or membership dues.”

Along with TCPB and CPAT, Vaughan is a member of the Texas Grain Producers Indemnity Board, and has served on the Precision Agriculture Advisory Commit-

tee and the Texas Panhandle Agricultural Research Advisory Board. Vaughan is a member of the agricultural committee of the Dumas Economic Development Corporation.

He formerly served on the National Corn Growers Association board, where Vaughan came to learn about different regions’ production practices and unique issues that each area faces.

“The size of farms, production methods and climatic differences vary from one production area to another, but there is an equivalent amount of diversity when you begin to discuss policy,” Vaughan explains.

According to Vaughan, agriculture has changed drastically over the past ten years. He mentions the explosion of new technology, the rise of



Dee Vaughan of Dumas

biotechnology, the financial and management aspects of business, producers spending more time studying the new technologies, the vast expansion of the ethanol industry, increasing globalization and water conservation methods.

Vaughan continues to be an advocate for agriculture and searches for new ways to better equip farmers for any challenges the corn industry might meet in the future. ●

Gibson, continued from p. 2

The demand for corn from U.S. producers has seen some decrease out of the drought persisting across Texas, the southern U.S. and the Corn Belt in 2012. We lost some of our export market in 2012 with the short crop, and now we are trying to build the demand back for U.S. corn which was displaced in the market by corn from South

America. The drought reduced cowherds across the southern U.S., which now has more than a million less cattle to feed for the year. These two factors alone will keep some pressure on the corn market.

Another uncertainty is the fact we have no farm bill in place as decisions are made. Negotiations are ongoing in D.C. at this time, and hope-

fully before the end of 2013 this will be resolved. While this helps part of the U.S., it really impacts our producers in South and Central Texas who make planting decisions in Dec. 2013 and Jan. 2014. We will share information as we get it on this important aspect that affects all farmers’ decisions. ●

ODDS *AND* ENDS



2013 CPAT annual meeting and elections

The 2013 CPAT annual meeting will be held immediately following the Texas Commodity Symposium, Dec. 4 in Amarillo, Texas.

During the meeting, elections will be held for

CPAT directors. Expiring positions include one director for District 1 and one director for District 4. Three At Large seats will be filled as well.

Current representatives for the expiring positions include

David Ford (1), Charles Ring (4), Scott Averhoff (AL), Robert Gordon (AL), and Max Swinburn (AL).

We hope to see you at the meeting next month!

TCPB announces biennial elections for five seats

The Texas Corn Producers Board will hold elections in two of its five voting regions to elect five board members where current members' seats are expiring. The nomination period to be on the ballot starts Nov. 23 and closes Dec. 23. The TCPB election is conducted by voting regions and will be held from Jan. 9-23, 2014.

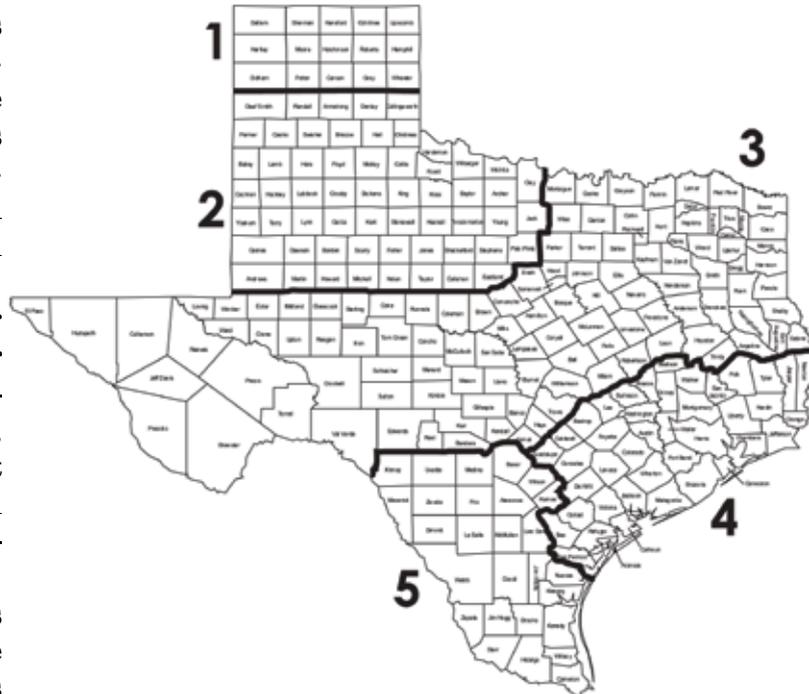
There are **four seats** open for election in **Voting Region One**, and **one seat** open for election in **Voting Region Four**.

Corn producers eligible to vote in the elections are persons, including the owner of a farm on which corn is produced or the owner's tenant or sharecropper, engaged

in the business of producing corn or causing corn to be produced for commercial purposes for at least one production period during the three years preced-

Any person qualified to vote is also qualified to seek nomination for election in the voting region which they reside. Nomination applications must be submitted to the TCPB signed by the applicant and 10 other eligible voters in this election. Applications are available at each county's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in the two voting regions where elections will occur, or they can be requested by mail directly from TCPB.

Access additional information regarding nominations and elections at www.TexasCorn.org or by calling



TCPB voting regions divided throughout the state.

ing the date of this election (Jan. 23, 2014). The producer must reside within the voting region.

800.647.CORN (2676).

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Robert Gordon, *Dallam Co.*

Mark Howard, *Parmer Co.*

Larry Mason, *Dallam Co.*

Gary Obenhaus, *Wharton Co.*

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Charles Ring, *San Patricio Co.*

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Jaclyn Roberts

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Shelbie Reid

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www.TexasCorn.org

Upcoming Events

November 28 -29, 2013

Office Closed

Thanksgiving

December 4, 2013

TX Commodity Symposium

Amarillo, Texas

December 1-3, 2013

TCP Board Meeting

Amarillo, Texas

December 24-25, 2013

Office Closed

Christmas

December 3-5, 2013

IDEAg Farm & Ranch Show

Amarillo, Texas

January 1, 2014

Office Closed

New Years



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