

# Consumers, influencers experience where food begins

When Texans sit down at the table for a meal they may not think much about where the food on their plate comes from, and the hard work that made it possible. A Field to Fork dinner held in Sherman County, Texas, this month aimed to bridge this gap in understanding by connecting food influencers and decision makers with the farmers that grow their food.

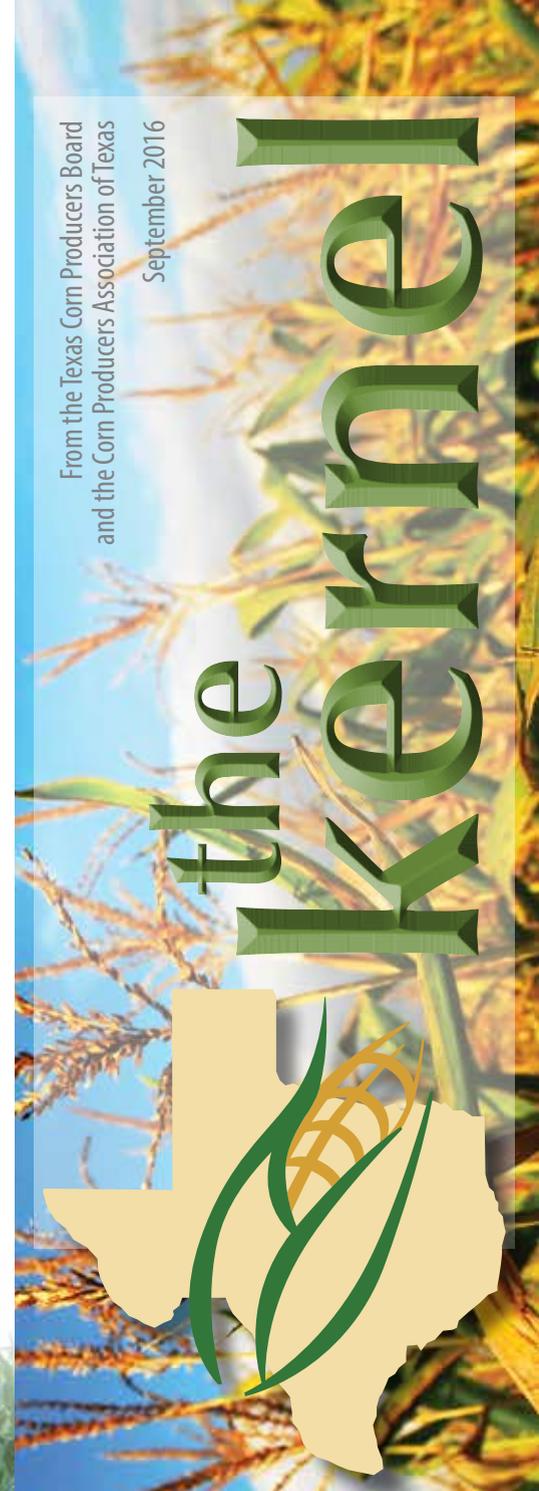
The evening's event was held at the Early Settlers Farm, and hosted by the Spurlock Family of Stratford, Texas. The family offered a peek into what makes the modern family farm work – Wesley and Susie Spurlock farm alongside their son Walter and his wife Nicole, as well as members of their extended family.

“Our family was thrilled to host 60 people on our farm

for an intimate, elegant meal and wonderful conversation about our food,” Susie Spurlock said. “Chef Colby Newman with the Amarillo Country Club prepared a meal comparable to any fine dining establishment in a large city, right here on our farm with Texas grown and Texas raised food.”

This elegant dining experience was in a corn field, where guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and a meal from one of the High Plains' premier chefs, and visited with Texas farmers about how they grow the crops that ultimately end up on their forks – all while surrounded by the crops grown on the High Plains of Texas. Beyond highlighting Texas crops and Texas products, attendees engaged in open conversation with the farmers that produce the food they eat

*continued on p. 6*



From the Texas Corn Producers Board  
and the Corn Producers Association of Texas  
September 2016

# the kernel

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# CORNER Comments



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

What challenging times we are in with our corn markets! As I am writing this, Dec. futures have set a new contract low for Dec. '16 corn at \$3.15 per bushel, which is the lowest corn price we have seen since corn futures were just below \$3.00 per bushel in September of 2009 – 7 years ago.

As crop forecasts predict record national corn yields and increasing carryovers, we here in Texas have seen harvest near completion for all areas in North, Central and South Texas, with harvest just about to begin on the High Plains. Yields in Texas so far have varied greatly

with some exceptional yields to very low yields, depending, as usual, on rainfall and heat. The High Plains looks set to have an average crop going into harvest. Total production of bushels in Texas appears set to come in above average based on increased acreages when totals are complete.

Looking on to next year, Dec. corn futures are trading at \$3.50-\$3.60 per bushel, this is not very encouraging as producers begin thinking about the 2017 crop. With corn prices at this level, and other commodities all trading at low levels, evaluating all production costs will be critical for building budgets  
*continued on p. 7*

While I'm not a big fan of coined words or phrases, a relatively new one surfacing is "agvocate." It implies being an advocate for agriculture. Agvocating is as diverse as is agriculture itself. I am a firm believer that women agvocates have exponentially more creditability than do men agvocates simply because they are the mothers of our children.

Historically, food manufacturers and restaurants would distinguish themselves by the positives in their products whether it was the perceived quality of a product because of its geographical origin or some other attribute. Currently, it seems as though they are trying to differentiate

themselves in the eye of the consumer by what their product does not contain whether any of the ingredients would have the perceived negative component or not. There is room for all forms of food and fiber production without denigrating any particular production system. Consumers speak with their pocketbooks, and I am convinced they can distinguish the lack of creditability of these false claims.

You may have noticed, I haven't said much about corn in this article. With the current world supply of grains and the size of this year's crop it's probably best left alone. If you have not harvested yet, I hope you have a safe and successful season. As always,



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

TCPB's mission is to increase the profitability of Texas corn farmers. Please contact us with thoughts, concerns or areas of interest.

# Grow conference to offer strategic skills for successful farm business

Farmers across the state are encouraged to attend the Grow conference hosted by Texas Corn Producers Jan. 4-5, 2017, in Austin, Texas.

TCP knows successfully running a farm is more than simple arithmetic. As a new generation of farmers return to the farm to assist and eventually take the reins, it's more important than ever that these farm businesspersons are well equipped with the tools they need for not only a bountiful harvest, but also a sustainable operation.

"My son, nephew and I attended this conference last year, and it was the best investment we've made in our farm business," Mark Howard, a farmer from Dalhart, Texas, said. "The event gave essential tools we could immediately go back and use to make our farm business effectively function now – particularly with multiple generations involved on the farm, as well as preparing for changing roles down the road."

The Grow conference will go beyond the basics many gained in school. This event will offer farm owners extensive knowledge on how to strategically manage their farm business.

Registration is \$100 per person. The event's subjects include:

**The event gave essential tools we could immediately go back and use to make our farm business effectively function now – particularly with multiple generations involved on the farm, as well as preparing for changing roles down the road.**

**-Mark Howard, Dalhart farmer**

best in their fields," Bruce Wetzel, a farmer from Sherman, Texas, said. "I've not seen such a robust program available to

farmers at such minimal costs. The investment is one that has made a lasting impact for the better of our farm."

Whether you're a seasoned farming professional or just getting your boots in the dirt, there's value to be gained by participating in this program.

Registration for this event is open! Register online and get more information at [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org).

## **Best Management Practices**

Danny Klinefelter  
*Texas A&M University  
and AgriLife Extension*

## **Strategic Planning and Megatrends**

David Kohl  
*Virginia Tech University*

## **Strategic Management**

Allan Gray  
*Purdue University*

## **Strategic Positioning**

Mike Boehlje  
*Purdue University*

"The speakers at this conference are among the very

Register TODAY!  
[www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org)

**GR W**  
Your farm. Your business. Your profit.

January 3-5, 2017  
Austin, Texas

# THE VOICE: Association News

*A note from the President...*

I wish I could say I'm optimistic as we're wrapping up grain harvest in North Texas. Unfortunately, when I look at corn prices hovering just over \$3, I and other farmers are left feeling the pinch to our pocketbooks – regardless of how we feel about the fruit of this year's crop.

The drop in farm income over the past three farming seasons has been the biggest plunge since the Great Depression, according to a recent study from CoBank. An economist with the company reported that our income as farmers has fallen more than 50 percent since 2013, and the debt-to-income ratio is on the rise.

Dwindling corn prices and a slight uptick in input costs

aren't a recipe to success. Adding insult to injury is the burden of unsound regulations and rules being passed down by the Environmental Protection Agency. Earlier this summer, CPAT called upon the Agency to set the volume of ethanol at (not below) the statutory levels set forth in the Renewable Fuel Standard. Now, CPAT is urging the Agency to use sound studies in its assessment on Atrazine, which, if banned, could **cost farmers as much as \$59 per acre.**

CPAT is working on our behalf with legislators and regulators so our voice is heard as we complete the work our livelihoods depend on from the tractor seat. If you aren't already a member, I encour-



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

age you to join CPAT and be a part of an association that is working to keep dollars in the farmer's wallet when times are tough. 🌽

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## Annual membership meeting, elections to be held in November

Corn Producers Association of Texas (CPAT) will hold its annual membership meeting on Nov. 29 in Amarillo, Texas. The meeting coincides with the board of directors' meetings.

At the meeting, CPAT will hold elections for five At Large board seats with expiring terms. CPAT board members with expiring terms are: **Scott Averhoff** of Ellis Co., **Robert Gordon** of Dallam



Co., **Mark Howard** of Dallam Co., **Charles Ring** of San Patricio Co., and **Max Swinburn** of Castro Co.

Additionally, CPAT members will slate officers for the

coming year. Current officers are: President Bruce Wetzel of Grayson Co., Vice President Joe Reed of Swisher Co., and Secretary/Treasurer Daniel Berglund of Wharton Co.

Additional details about the meeting time and exact location will be available closer to the event and posted online at [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org). 🌽

# Exporting corn – in many forms

## TCP invests in key organizations

At its August board meeting, Texas Corn Producers Board (TCPB) voted to join or amplify participation and support for several organizations that work to export corn or corn products.

When prices are low and stocks are up, it is more important than ever to ensure farmers have a growing market demand for their corn. With much of the world's population beyond the nation's borders, driving the demand for exports is key.

Recognizing this need, TCPB directors voted to increase the board's support

of the U.S. Grains Council (USGC). USGC develops export markets for U.S. barley, corn, grain sorghum and related products, including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles.

Texas is a corn deficit state, and for good reason – the state's livestock industry is thriving. Recognizing the importance of this vital customer for corn, TCPB also determined to join the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and the U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC).

USMEF works to put "U.S. meat on the world's table" –

as it strives to increase the value and profitability of the U.S. beef, pork and lamb industries by enhancing demand for their products in export markets through a dynamic partnership of all stakeholders.

USAPEEC works to promote exports of U.S. poultry and eggs around the world. Additionally, it is an advocate for the industry on trade policy issues.

TCPB looks forward to being a part of these groups to increase demand for the farmers' corn and corn products. 🌽

## Corn Cob Classic: A hole-in-one

What comes to mind when you think green – green corn stalks, green grass and maybe \$\$\$? Each of these played a major role for the Corn Cob Classic golf tournament at the country club in Plainview, Texas, benefiting the Texas Corn Political Action Committee\* (Texas CornPAC) of the Corn Producers Association of Texas (CPAT).

"The weather couldn't have been any better and our players had an enjoyable day," Reed said. "Numerous contributions from our sponsors, made this golf tournament a success and a tremendous fundraising effort for the state's CornPAC."

A special thanks to the sponsors that made this year's event a success:

**Platinum:** Ag Producers Cooperative, Capital Farm Credit, Ray Lee Equipment, Syngenta.

**Gold:** AgTexas Farm Credit, Centennial Bank, CHS, Hale County Farm Bureau, Happy State Bank, Monsanto/DeKalb, Pioneer, Prosperity Bank, Richard Chapman Insurance, Street Community Grain, Texas Seed Trade Association, Tye Roofing, Wilbur Ellis.

**Silver:** Attebury Grain, B & W Ariel Spraying, Brown Graham, Browns Power & Equipment, Flatland Grain, Gavilon Grain, James Brother Implement, John Bender, Kormerstone Funeral Directors,

McFadden Trailer Sales, Rousseau Agency- Shannon Hooper, Street Real Estate, Swisher Electric Cooperative, Wylie Implement & Spray Center.

**Bronze:** Aurora, Panhandle Popcorn, Peoples Bank, Roger Jolly Insurance, and Williams Seed.

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 assure a future for Texas farmers. 🌽

\*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, so-licitation for contributions is limited to CPAT memberships.

# Tell the EPA: Don't restrict use of Atrazine

Urge the Environmental Protection Agency to use sound science in the Agency's review of Atrazine. Currently, the draft assessment is not based on sound science, and it is particularly concerning that EPA has chosen the base ecological risk assessment on studies its own Scientific Advisory Panel deemed "flawed" in 2012.

The EPA itself estimated Atrazine's value to corn farmers at \$28 per acre. In current market conditions,

where farmers are struggling to break even, every dollar counts.

Banning Atrazine will have an immediate and devastating impact on America's farmers and the environment. One study found farming without Atrazine could **cost farmers as much as \$59 per acre**. That is a price America's farm families cannot afford.

Farmers care deeply about the safety of agricultural pesticides. We have a real stake in keeping our

land, rivers and ponds safe for our families, neighbors and communities.

Atrazine is widely used because of its largely recognized benefits. It is among the most reliable herbicides available and plays a critical role in combatting herbicide resistant weeds.

Join fellow farmers today by urging the EPA not to restrict the use of Atrazine by the Oct. 4 deadline for comments. Learn more and submit comments online at [www.ncga.com/atz](http://www.ncga.com/atz).

## Field to fork, continued from p. 1

every day. Women farmer volunteers associated with CommonGround from across the state also offered insight on farming practices.

The event was made possible by the Water Grows Jobs initiative, which is a partnership of the Texas Corn Producers (TCP) and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas (NRCS). The partners saw this opportunity for food influencers

and decision makers to gain a greater understanding of the sustainable farming practices in Texas, including water conservation and technological advancements used to benefit the Ogallala Aquifer. Additionally, the event offered insight on other hot button issues for anyone purchasing food such as farm ownership, GMOs, food safety, and local and organic food.

"It was a great time for consumers to just have conversations about what farmers are doing to sustainably produce our food," Nicole Spurlock, who is also a CommonGround volunteer, said. "Texas farmers are using the latest technologies and resources

to conserve our valuable natural resources – all the while growing food we know is safe and feel comfortable feeding our own families."

Supporters of the event include: Spurlock Farms, CommonGround volunteers, Midland Meat Co., Texas Gulf Shrimp, Texas Wines, High Plains Winegrowers Association, Go-Texan – Texas Department of Agriculture, and Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.

Gain further insight about how Texas farmers are conserving natural resources, including the Ogallala Aquifer, by visiting [WaterGrowsJobs.org](http://WaterGrowsJobs.org). Consumers interested in more information about hot topic issues related to their food can also visit [FindOurCommonGround.com](http://FindOurCommonGround.com).



# ODDS *AND* ENDS



## Sharing common ground with consumers nationwide

“Early bird gets the worm” is something fully embraced across many of America’s farms – knocking out a day’s work before the afternoon heat arrives in the summer... Two Texas farmers put a whole new spin on this: completing more than 35 television, radio and online interviews before noon!

On Aug. 4, Nicole Spurlock of Stratford, Texas, and Gina Sugarek of Beeville, Texas, participated in a satellite me-

dia tour at the Early Settlers Farm in Sherman County. These women discussed how farmers are using technology to keep the environment safe, as well as how food is grown efficiently by using practices such as conservation tillage and crop rotation.

The satellite media tour enabled the farmers to share their message with consumers from the east coast to the west coast – and everywhere in between

– all in one morning’s work. Through this effort, their message has reached more than **11.6 million people** with 549 airings nationwide.

Spurlock and Sugarek are volunteers through Common-Ground Texas, which is coordinated by Texas Corn Producers. Find out more about Common-Ground, its messages, and how to become a volunteer at [FindOurCommonGround.com](http://FindOurCommonGround.com).

## A note on agribusiness mergers

There are several significant mergers in the works.

Texas Corn Producers (TCP) feels these mergers present heavy consolidation of seed traits and chemi-

cals. TCP is working to get a full analysis done by the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University to determine the potential impact to Texas

corn farmers. Once analysis is fully complete, appropriate actions will be taken to work on farmers’ behalf moving forward.

## TCP welcomes new communications intern

Savanna Barksdale of Farwell, Texas, is learning the ropes as the new communications intern. Barksdale assists with the development of various educational and promotional materials for the corn industry, including social media and

website management, as well as newsletters.

Barksdale is a junior agricultural communications major at Texas Tech University pursuing minors in Spanish and political science. Barksdale shares her dedication for agriculture through her

involvement in several student organizations.

Barksdale is enjoying the opportunity to have a practical application for her studies. Learning about CPAT’s legislative efforts is especially appealing for the aspiring agricultural advocate.

## Gibson comments, continued from p. 2

for 2017. Having a good marketing strategy will be very important in the case of knowing when to sell some of the expected production.

I encourage producers to begin thinking early about vari-

ety selection, soil testing, and pricing all inputs for the 2017 crop. All this information will be very important to have when putting together budgets for 2017 and making financial plans. Though harvest is just

starting on the High Plains, many of our South and Central Texas producers are already in the planning mode for 2017.

I hope everyone finishes harvest safely and in a timely manner. 🌽

# 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

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*Executive Director*

Stephanie Pruitt  
*Communications Director*

Taylor Bartek  
*Administrative Coord.*

Kaci Bearden  
*Business & Finance Coord.*

Hallie Bertrand  
*Industry Relations*

Angie Martin  
*Industry Relations*

Savanna Barksdale  
*Communications Assistant*

Lindsay Hamer  
*Staff Assistant*

## Upcoming Events

**October 19-20, 2016**  
S. Texas Farm Show  
*Victoria, Texas*

**November 29-30, 2016**  
TCPB & CPAT Meetings  
*Amarillo, Texas*

**November 24-25, 2016**  
TCP Office closed

**Even more events at:**  
[www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org)

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