

# Texas agronomist hopes research helps farmers do more with less

## TCPB research spotlight, part two

TCPB continues its series to highlight ongoing research efforts funded by the state's corn checkoff.

Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., researcher and assistant professor for Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo, is researching ways to understand the unique needs of corn crops to help producers do more with less. Bell is working on two separate research projects that are being funded by Texas Corn Producers Board (TCPB).

Research is where a portion of checkoff dollars managed by TCPB goes toward. Whether it's research with chemicals, insects, water conservation, soil or the plants themselves, they all have a common goal of creating the greatest production opportunity and profitability for producers. TCPB accepts research proposals each fall. The research committee then reviews proposals from researchers across the state to determine the direction of funding. Research goals vary, but ultimately work toward reducing time and fiscal expenses, and capitalizing market opportunities for farmers in the state.

Bell, along with her co-investigators: Robert Schwartz with United States Department of Agriculture - Agriculture Research Service, and Qingwu Xue with Texas A&M AgriLife Research, are collaborating on an

irrigated corn project. They are evaluating the effects of plant population and irrigation rate on grain yield; specifically evaluating the effect of water stress at tasseling and pollination, as well as how carbohydrate partitioning is affected.

This research, which is conducted in the High Plains where natural water is often limited, works to determine if it matters when water is applied to the corn crop throughout the duration of its' growing period. Through research, she is finding that even in a year with above average precipitation, there is still a yield reduction when fields are planted with too dense a population for well capacity.

Producers cannot change their well capacity and do not have control over in-season precipitation, but pre-season decisions, such as hybrid selection and plant population can increase a producer's production potential.

Bell is also conducting research with fellow Texas A&M AgriLife Research co-investigators Calvin Trosle, Ronnie Schnell, and Qingwu Xue. They have been working on a dryland corn project in the High Plains – a region that is predominantly irrigated: evaluating the influence of planting

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

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# the kernel



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# CORNER Comments



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

We have had a very cold start to the 2018 crop season across Texas in many ways. Much of the state expe-

rienced below normal temperatures the first and third week of the month. The Panhandle has been extremely dry, having passed the 90-day mark for having less than 0.1 inch of precipitation. Some other sections of the state had some precipitation along with cold, which halted field work in those areas.

The markets have been in the deep freeze as well: coming off a large national crop and large projected carryovers of corn. Recently, I was sitting in a meeting in Plainview, Texas, and a grower asked how long I thought the market would stay this low. A question I was unable to answer. Coming off a year that was less than perfect across much of the U.S. with continual reports that corn yields would be down, only to wind up with a larger crop than expected, it is hard to see a significant increase in price anytime soon.

Factors needed for a market in-

crease include a major weather event either in the U.S. or one of the other major corn-growing countries. A significant increase in corn demand by a large increase in exports, increased usage for feed or industrial, or a large increase in ethanol production. The weather factor is one we have no control over so it is strictly a waiting game to see what happens there.

Increase in demand is one area we at TCPB strive to grow. The check-off supports the U.S. Grains Council, which is working to expand the export of corn, ethanol, and distillers grain around the world. TCPB also works with the U.S. Meat Export Federation, as we partner to increase beef, pork and lamb demand around the world. We also partner with U.S. Poultry and Egg Export Council in promoting U.S. poultry and egg products. ●

## Going the Extra Mile at Texas Motor Speedway

Texas Corn Producers set up once again for a fun-filled weekend at the Texas Motor Speedway, engaging with NASCAR goes about ethanol and the agricultural industry. The weekend of Nov. 3-5, 2017, farmer volunteers and staff from across the country gathered to promote American Ethanol and offer insight on how America's food, feed, fuel and fiber are produced. With more than 230,000 attendees at the weekend's races, TCP was definitely in for a busy weekend!

Thousands of fans raced over to the American Ethanol #PoweredByCorn midway exhibit to not only be entered to win prizes, but to also learn about family-owned and operated farms, safety and innovation, and sustainability. In order to be entered to win a daily prize, participants had to race through the exhibit: stopping at six pit stops to find the answers to the questions in their entry form.

### Ready, set, go!

1. Racers started at ASCO Equipment's Case IH combine, to figure out what big piece of equipment

was missing and would prevent it from harvesting corn.

2. Then racers entered Texas Farm Bureau's Harvest Experience where they got to see what it was like to drive a combine.
3. Next, it was on to TFB's interactive Mobile Learning Barn to gain insight on important aspects of agriculture from key elements to make corn grow to its primary uses.
4. Racers then had to find the fact of the day located near Austin Dillon's #3 show car. These facts offered insight on what farms look like today, food safety and agricultural innovations, and sustainability.
5. The last stop before the finish was to learn the power of corn in ethanol at the Biofuels Mobile Education Center.
6. Finally, racing over to the finish line for a volunteer crewmember to validate racers' entry forms, which had to be presented if they were drawn as the day's lucky winner!

While engaging with people at the exhibit, volunteers and staff were also racing through the campgrounds and infield: interacting with campers and passing out items to promote agriculture and ethanol uses #PoweredByCorn. Austin Dillon, #3 race-car driver, also made a pit stop at the midway exhibit to sign autographs and visit with fans – drawing a tremendous crowd that kept coming!

The fun didn't stop there; Pat Green was this year's featured artist of the Loud & Proud the Pre-Race Concert powered by Texas Corn. Over 6,500 Pre-Race passes were distributed. With this sponsorship came media publicity throughout the metroplex leading up to the event, online visibility, speedway signage, and mentions by Pat Green on stage during the concert. TCP was also seen on Big Hoss – the world's largest HD television – and as part of the Loud & Proud Pre-Race Show Powered by Texas Corn logo was painted on the ballfield. TCP also did a statewide radio promotion to give away pre-race concert

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## National Corn Yield Contest winners announced

Last month, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) announced the 2017 National Corn Yield Contest winners. Corn farmers exhibited strong participation and pushed through production and market challenges to achieve competitive yields in this year's contest.

The National Corn Yield Contest provides farmers with more than an opportunity to compete Roger Zylstra, chair of NCGA's Stewardship Action Team, says.

"The techniques first developed by contest winners grow into far-reaching advances, helping farmers across the country excel in a variety of situations. Our contest emphasizes innovation both from growers and technology providers, thus enabling us to

meet the growing demand for food, feed, fuel and fiber."

Zylstra mentions corn farmers' initial interest to join NCGA stems from the competition, but members become increasingly involved and supportive of the association's efforts as they become more engaged and aware of its many activities.

View all national and state contest winners at [www.NCGA.com](http://www.NCGA.com).

Texas Corn Producers (TCP) would like to thank all who participated and congratulate our state contest winners.

Winners receive national recognition in publications such as the NCYC Corn Yield Guide, as well as cash trips or other awards from participating sponsoring seed, chemical

and crop protection companies. The winners will be honored during this year's Commodity Classic in Anaheim, Calif.

The National Corn Yield Contest has allowed farmers to engage in healthy competition among peers for over 50 years. This friendly rivalry helps maximize corn production, which helps feed and fuel the world. It's more than competition and recognition; it's an opportunity to learn from years past.

Interested in participating in the 2018 National Corn Contest? All Corn Producers Association of Texas members are eligible to compete. Complete details are available online at [www.NCGA.com](http://www.NCGA.com).

Rank	Entrant Name	City	Hybrid Brand	Number	Yield
<b>Division A: Non-Irrigated</b>					
1	Todd Kimbrell Jr	Itasca	DEKALB	DKC64-34	217.5012
<b>Division E: No-Till/Strip-Till Non-Irrigated</b>					
1	Rick Wilson	Decatur	NuTech Seed	5F713	207.6158
2	John Reznik	Dumas	Pioneer	P1151AMX	135.2990
<b>Division E: No-Till/Strip-Till Irrigated</b>					
1	Bill Graff	Dalhart	DEKALB	DKC64-34RIB	306.4412
2	Kent Gordon	Dalhart	Pioneer	P1197AMT	266.9360
<b>Division I: Irrigated</b>					
1	Jody Bezner	Texline	Pioneer	P1311AMXT	325.6997
2	Tommy & Valerie Cartrite	Sunray	Dyna-Gro	D58VC37	311.0238
3	Arlie Petty	Canyon	Pioneer	P1197AMXT	277.1247

## TCPB biennial elections underway through Jan. 29

Texas Corn Producers Board is holding elections in three of its five voting regions to elect five board members where current members' seats are expiring. The TCPB election is conducted by voting regions, and runs through Jan. 29, 2018.

Voters will be voting for qualified candidates who have sought nomination within the respective TCPB voting regions where elections are to occur. In Voting Region One, Mark Howard of Dallam County has been nominated

for one of the two seats; voters may indicate a write-in candidate for the second seat. Nominees for the two seats in Voting Region Three are Scott Averhoff of Ellis County and Aaron Martinika of Milam County, and Charles Ring of San Patricio County has been nominated for the seat in Voting Region Four. Voters may also vote for board members by "writing in" the name of any eligible persons.

Ballots containing the nominations of all persons who have validly filed

are available at grain elevators and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices in each of the appropriate voting regions, or by writing TCPB. All voters otherwise qualified to vote as corn producers must reside in a county within the TCPB voting region where they seek to vote.

Complete details and information on the 2018 election are available online at [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org).

# THE VOICE: Association News

## A note from the President...

The 2018 farm bill is top of mind for many in the agricultural industry as we go into the new year.

In D.C., staff and legislators have been at work on the bones for the next farm bill for several months. Corn Producers Association of Texas and others have already had many conversations with key legislators and their staff on the needs for the state's corn farmers as they begin work on this important piece of legislation.

There is still much to be done before the next farm bill nears completion. However, it is imperative that those working on the policies that impact our farms hear from the state's farmers to know our needs and concerns.

CPAT works diligently to stay in direct communication with legislators in D.C. so they are aware of the needs of Texas farmers. The need for a farm bill that helps keep farms and farmers afloat and able to continue with their cherished profession, de-

spite the obstacles hurdled by Mother Nature and market prices. A bill with options - not "one size fits all" - is crucial to the livelihood of America's farmland and rural America. It's essential to ensure the country has a stable, affordable, quality food supply.

CPAT is able to bring the farmer's voice to D.C. because of those that understand this advocacy is vital to our livelihoods. If you aren't already, support these advocacy efforts by joining the association today. For just \$60, your membership supports the ongoing communication with legislators in D.C. and Austin on important issues such as the farm bill. Additionally, there are a number of benefits for members, including a FREE bag of seed from our partners, retail discounts, exclusive vehicle and hotel pricing, and more!

Get the complete details on association membership, and join CPAT by visiting [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org).



**Joe Reed**  
**CPAT President**  
**Kress, Texas**

## High Plains farmers faced high fumonisin levels in 2017

While fumonisin is not new to the High Plains region, corn farmers saw it at unusually high levels in 2017. Fumonisin, a by-product of fungal activity, is produced by the fungi species *fusarium verticillioides*.

Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., and Jason Woodward, Ph.D., both with Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, said weather conditions in 2016 and 2017 made an optimal environment for fungal growth and mycotoxin production. With conditions being hot and dry during flowering, followed by a wet and cool August, the fungi grew and produced the mycotoxin at rapid levels.

Infection of the crop can occur without any visible symptoms, leaving farmers unaware of the fumonisin present in their crops. Many farmers were docked heavily due to the mycotoxin, and some were surprised to receive letters from the Office of the State Chemist.

Under the Texas Commercial Feed Control Act, manufacturers and distributors of commercial feed are licensed and monitored by the state

chemist, Tim Herrman, Ph.D. Farmers who deliver corn directly to feedyards are usually exempt from obtaining such a license. Due to the high levels of fumonisin present in the corn this year, the state chemist's office sent letters requiring farmers to register for a commercial feed distributor license, pay inspection fees, and pay tonnage fees for farmers selling more than 250 tons.

"Texas Corn Producers Board is working with the Office of the State Chemist to understand how this will affect our farmers," David Gibson, executive director of TCPB, said. "The Board is working to ensure that our farmers are still exempt from this Act, since this year was an extreme circumstance."

As TCPB became aware of the high mycotoxin levels, they quickly began informing farmers of the implications and measures they needed to take. The Board hosted farmer briefings at the beginning and end of the harvesting season that included representatives from the state chemist, USDA – Risk Management Agency,

and AgriLife Extension. In addition to making direct contact with farmers in the effected region early in the harvest season, it continues to keep farmers updated through TCPB social media and website.

Bell said it is unlikely farmers will see fumonisin levels like this next year. Long-term forecasts look favorable for farmers, but farmers can also mitigate their risk by adopting management practices that help reduce the damage of insects and smut.

Gibson said TCPB continues to fund research for new corn varieties, as well as pest and disease management such as fumonisin and other mycotoxins.

"Our goal is to take what we learned from this last season and find a way to protect farmers in the future," Gibson said.

More information about fumonisin and corn production in the state is available online at [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org).



# TCPB research spotlight part two: Doing more with less

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dates and population on the performance of three corn hybrids of different maturity classes.

Bell states that many producers are evaluating dryland corn as a cost-effective alternative to other dryland crops.

“Additionally, we have had above average in-season precipitation in the last three years that has led to fairly good dryland corn yields.”

Traditionally, dryland corn has been a very risky cropping option for the Texas High Plains. Precipitation timing, as well as hybrid selection and management, are critical for the success of a dryland corn crop.

“In the High Plains, irrigation is necessary to stabilize production, but regionally, well capacities are becoming limited so producers are irrigating corn at reduced rates, as well as planting more acres to dryland corn,” said Bell.

Within this research she is finding that the dryland corn shows considerable variation in wet years.

Bell states that it is important to conduct research for multiple years in order to evaluate the stability of the results. She also says that long-term stability is important if producers are going to implement hybrids or

management based on research trials.

Research doesn’t go without its challenges. Bell explains how mother nature was no friend to her research. In 2015, the irrigated corn project was hailed out, but they obtained excellent data in 2016. However, the 2017 corn plots were affected by herbicide damage, but the researchers were able to replant. As for the dryland corn project, it received early-season stress in the first May planting date, as well as stress during the reproductive period. For the late-planted plots, they showed no significant signs of stress.

While there is a long history of irrigated corn research in Texas, it is important that researchers continue to evaluate new ways to improve farming.

“If we can manage the risk of corn production with limited water, we can help ensure production stability for farmers. Stability is key to probability.”



AgriLife Agronomist Jourdan Bell collects data to check the progress of her corn research funded by TCPB.

Bell explains why her research is important to farmers, and how the success of the research not only impacts the regional corn farmers. There is a trickle down affect in rural communities, and consider all the businesses our farmers support.

“Ultimately, the goal, as well as that of my [co-investigators], is to obtain timely data for Texas High Plains corn farmers to optimize production.”

## Texas Motor Speedway Promotion, *continued*

tickets, race tickets, and encourage the stations to also share agriculture and ethanol facts and trivia.

The whirlwind of a weekend gave TCP the ability to reach thousands of race fans with key agricultural and ethanol messaging in a 3-day period: making the 2017 #PoweredByCorn activation was a great success!

TCP appreciates the support from fellow organizations that saw the value in this event, including Kansas Corn Growers, Minnesota Corn Growers, Missouri Corn Growers, and Nebraska Corn Growers.

Be on the look out for another agricultural promotion event at Texas Motor Speedway at the NASCAR races Nov. 2-4, 2018!



# NCGA Action Teams hold first meetings of FY 2018

“I wanted to learn more about our industry and help fill the need of leadership,” Risk Management Action Team member Aaron Martinka said. “I didn’t want to become so immersed in my own geography that I wasn’t aware of the issues affecting me from the more broad perspective.”

These are challenging times for the corn industry. With so much uncertainty in climate, market prices, and a slew of other obstacles; national farmer involvement is even more important. Each year, the National Corn Growers Association appoints a group of farmer leaders to serve on Action Teams to carry out the purpose and objectives of the association.

## Involvement

Last month, action teams held their first meeting of the fiscal year. Five Texas farmers were in attendance:

- **Lindsey Bowers of Inez, Texas - Consumer Engagement Action Team**

This action team reviewed the progress of ongoing projects such as CommonGround, HungerU, and social media efforts, and determined strategic plan recommendations for the Corn Board.

- **Aaron Martinka of Buckholts, Texas - Risk Management Action Team**

Tax reform analysis and assessing key tax code provisions is in the works through the team.

- **Charles Ring of Sinton, Texas - Corn Productivity & Quality Action Team Participant**

The team reviewed the research funded by the Aflatoxin Mitigation Center of Excellence (AMCOE), which is managed by this action team,

in effort to combat aflatoxin affecting growers across the nation.

- **Jim Sugarek of Beeville, Texas - Corn Productivity & Quality Action Team**

Ongoing research support efforts and format of the Corn Research Ideation Workshop were topics of discussion for this action team.

- **Chad Wetzel of Tom Bean, Texas - Freedom to Operate Action Team**

The team approved spending for multiple collaborative efforts such as Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) and gene editing economic research; programs used to foster better production environments and profitability for farmers.

NCGA relies heavily on the participation of these farmer leaders for their one-year term. A maximum of 11 voting members – including one state staff member and the board liaison, each with full voting rights are appointed to each action team. Action teams are a way for local farmers to get involved at a national level. It benefits Texas to have a voice at the table in these action teams, as they guide and direct national efforts for the industry as a whole.

## Getting to Work

Corn – a versatile grain used in a variety of products such as chewing gum, cosmetics, and even fuel. Action teams are taking action to bring this valuable commodity to the forefront of the food and fiber industry.

“I’ve enjoyed working with Texas Corn Producer’s the last year, and wanted to elevate my engagement to the next level,” Bowers said.

As NCGA Action Team applications opened, members of Corn Producers Association of Texas quickly expressed a desire to get involved. As one of the leading states in corn production, CPAT members realized the value of linking state and national organizations. With the first meeting of the fiscal year concluded, responsibilities of action teams are starting to unfold.

“On the Corn Productivity & Quality Action Team, we cover corn research on an agronomic end,” Sugarek said. “We are planning ideation workshops this spring to listen to farmers and determine our research needs.”

2018 poses to be a pivotal year for agriculture with the farm bill coming into the spotlight – heightening the role of action teams. Current members are getting to work implementing the plans set for the year and are excited to see the fruits of their labor.

“My biggest takeaway from my experience was watching a live focus group talk about food and agriculture,” Bowers said. “While I understood that one of agriculture’s biggest challenges is consumers’ misconceptions, I didn’t understand the depth of those created... I look forward to working with NCGA in this capacity, as well as being the liaison to Texas Corn.”

There are many moving efforts underway with the direction of all action teams – each working to grow market opportunities, improve the regulatory environment, and ultimately work toward improving profitability for farmers nationwide. We look forward to seeing how the association and industry will benefit from the efforts of these farmer volunteers. 🌽



Find out more about NCGA activities at [www.NCGA.com](http://www.NCGA.com)



# ODDS *AND* ENDS



## Association awards youth scholarships, grant

The Corn Producers Association of Texas (CPAT) was pleased to receive a variety of strong scholarship applications in the high school and college division from youth members. Two students were awarded \$1,000 CPAT scholarships to go toward their higher education.

Payton Pustejovsky, Abbott High School student, is the scholarship winner in the high school division. He plans on attending Texas A&M University to major in kinesiology. Payton's essay focused on mycotoxins' impact on corn.

Claire Dallmeyer is the winner of the college division. She is a student

at Texas Tech University, originally from Poth, Texas. Claire is an animal science major, and she wrote about the impacts of corn earworm.

"This year's collection of applications for the CPAT scholarship was competitive with highly qualified students," Lauren Prine, Education and Producer Relations Director, said. "We are proud to support high-achieving students in their pursuits of higher education - particularly when they're looking to join the ag industry upon graduation."

TCP is grateful to all of the students who took the time to apply for this scholarship, as well as to

the individuals who helped promote the scholarship.

Additionally, this year the association awarded a grant to Erin Steglich with Holland FFA. Erin is pursuing an online agriculture campaign entitled "Truth About Agriculture"

We look forward to seeing the fruits of Erin's work, as she engages with consumers where many of them go to look for information about farming, food, and the path it takes to arrive on their plates.

Follow the Texas Corn Producers on social media for updates on services and events just like our youth outreach efforts!

## TCP board member, leader honored by alma mater

Texas Tech University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources honored three standout leaders with the Gerald W. Thomas Outstanding Agriculturalist Award on Nov. 9 during its 90th annual Pig Roast at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center.

Texas Corn Producers congratulates long-time board member and leader, Dee Vaughan of Dumas, who was the recipient of the 2017 outstanding agriculturalist of agricultural production. The annual outstanding

agriculturalist awards recognize individuals for contributions to various areas of agriculture.

Vaughan studied agricultural economics at Texas Tech. He has since worked extensively on policy and regulatory issues pertaining to agriculture in the areas of farm policy, energy, transportation and trade.

More information about this prestigious award and the 2017 recipients is available online at [www.depts.ttu.edu/agriculturalsciences](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/agriculturalsciences).



## TCP welcomes communications coordinator

In December, Bryce White of Lubbock, Texas, joined the Texas Corn Producers (TCP) team as the communications coordinator.

Bryce was raised in a ranching and farming family, with operations based in Bailey and Lamb counties. He is a graduate of Texas Tech University, with a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's in agricultural communications. He recently completed an internship with the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, under Chairman K. Michael Conaway.

Bryce has served as a vice president and senator in Texas Tech Student Government Association, a graduate assistant in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications, and as a student assistant in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

Bryce will be helping TCP with communications, events, education and outreach.



# 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.

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Bruce Wetzel, Grayson Co.

Steve Yoder, Dallam Co.

## Staff

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Executive Director

**Angie Martin**  
Grassroots & Industry Affairs Director

**Shannon Neuenschwander**  
Finance & Compliance Director

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Education & Producer Relations Director

**Stephanie Pruitt**  
Communications & Public Affairs Director

**Bryce White**  
Communications Coordinator

**Morgan Havelka**  
Communications & Staff Assistant

**Paul Montgomery**  
Communications & Staff Assistant

## MAILING PANEL



Facebook.com/TexasCorn  
Flickr.com/TexasCorn  
Instagram: @TexasCornProducers  
Twitter: @TexasCorn  
YouTube.com/TexasCorn

www.TexasCorn.org  
4205 N. Interstate 27  
Lubbock, Texas 79403  
806.763.CORN (2676) phone  
806.762.2674 fax

## Upcoming Events

Texas Corn Producers board meetings will be held  
March 27-28 in Dallas, Texas.

As the industry prepares for the next season, there are a number of  
events across the state.

Visit [www.TexasCorn.org](http://www.TexasCorn.org) for the most up-to-date list of events.

## Support our Corporate Members



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