

Serving Texas farmers amidst coronavirus (COVID-19)

In recent weeks, many Americans walked into grocery stores with aisle after aisle of empty grocery shelves for the first time in their lives. Texas farmers, and those across the country, know keeping “business as usual” (as best as possible) is key to keeping an abundant, quality supply of domestically-produced food available for consumers – whether they’re homebound or carrying out their “everyday lives” as it looked just weeks ago.

Advocating for Agriculture

Texas Corn Producers Association (TCPA) is here to support the state’s farmers as the nation faces a shift of what’s “normal” for weeks ahead, and communities work to do their part in combatting the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

TCPA is seeking farmers’ input on farm implications of COVID-19’s spread. Please take a few minutes to let the association know how you see the coronavirus impacting your farm by completing our quick online survey at www.TexasCorn.org.

TCPA joined fellow agricultural organizations across the state in requesting the governor to deem agriculture an “essential business” prior to the governor’s initial executive order that limited many public gatherings and business operations.

In the letter, these agricultural interest groups reiterated “those who supply feed, seed, water, fertilizer, herbicides, or insecticides or care for animals, groves, greenhouses, nurseries, vineyards, forests, farms, and ranches cannot have their workforce depleted overnight without irreparable damage to this year’s crop and negative implications on short- and long-term animal welfare. In addition, agricultural labor shortages could significantly disrupt the food supply chain, exacerbating the challenges already faced by food retailers and consumers.”

TCPA appreciates Governor Abbott recognizing the importance of agriculture and acknowledging it as a “critical infrastructure industry.”

There is no documentation required for agricultural workers going to and from their work. However, the Texas Department of Agriculture has made available a signed letter from the agency reiterating agriculture’s status at this time. Texas Corn Producers (TCP) has this available on its website, www.TexasCorn.org.

On the Farm

TCP continues sifting through developments to offer insight on industry impacts for Texas farm businesses.

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From Texas Corn Producers Board
and Texas Corn Producers Association
April 2020

the kernel



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CORNER Comments



David Gibson
TCPB Executive Director
TCPA Exec. Vice President

We are in a challenging time as a nation. This totally unforeseen issue with the coronavirus (COVID-19) has totally disrupted our nation and shown how delicate our food supply was when the panic buying occurred.

In recent years, the public seemed to forget that the grocery store does not just automatically replenish the shelves. This unfortunate event has brought to light that farmers and ranchers have to produce the supplies for the stores, while the transportation industry has to move it to the stores. I hope as a nation we come out of this with the general public having a renewed appreciation for our agricultural producers.

Another thing is our dependence on the rest of the world for some of our critical needs. A dependence on China for some of our medicines has come to light for a public that was largely

unaware of this. However, the past two years have already shown the agricultural world the dependence we have on foreign countries to provide some of our inputs: from steel to cattle medications, agriculturists have already been dealing with this issue.

I hope all have heeded the precautionary statements and stayed healthy. We will come out of this situation in a better place. We often talk about the facts that several generations of our citizens have not suffered from food shortages or common hygiene items such as toilet tissue.

Please stay safe and let us know of issues you may be having with obtaining critical inputs at planting time. Agricultural organizations are working very closely together to ensure that we can all continue to produce the food to feed Texas and the world. 🌽

The start of a growing season, year and new decade have been a whirlwind thus far.

TCPB started the year by holding its biennial elections for board members representing regions 1 and 4. Thanks to all those that took the time to participate in this election. I look forward to continue working with the four other board members who will join me in reaffirming our vows to serve on the board and steer direction of the checkoff's efforts at our upcoming spring meeting.

The meeting we held this spring is unique: we held it virtually in effort to support the social distancing measures in place to soften the blow of coronavirus (COVID-19) across the state. While much of the nation's businesses are functioning with modified hours and operations, it's business as close to usual for those of us on the farm. There are still fields to be prepped, corn to be planted, and crops to be tended.

As we navigate uncharted territory over the coming weeks, it's im-

portant for those of us in rural Texas to be doing our part too. For many, this may just be holding our morning gatherings to issue duties for the day via phone rather than in person. However, we also must keep in mind patience and plan ahead as best we can as we move into the growing season. At this time, I haven't heard of disruptions to seed, fertilizer and other input supplies. Companies that work in closer quarters such as our implement maintenance and service, receiving parts and more pose the possibility for impacts in the near future – if not already.

As farmers, we're no strangers to obstacles and challenges on our businesses and livelihoods. Time and again we come together, work together and overcome anything that comes our way. I know Texas agriculture can be a shining point in times that can seem grim. I'm thankful for the opportunity to work alongside you as we get in the fields to grow the foundation of our food supply. 🌽



Robert Gordon
TCPB Chairman
Dalhart, Texas

For the latest industry information & resources for your farm business, visit:
www.TexasCorn.org

Texas Corn Producers Board directors elected, appointed

Five directors re-elected, one appointed

In the fourteenth statewide election since the Texas Corn Producers Board (TCPB) became a statewide entity in 1990, five board members were re-elected in the organization's biennial elections held in January.

Robert Gordon of Dallam County, **Wesley Spurlock** of Sherman County, **Dee Vaughan** of Moore County, and **Steven Yoder** of Dallam County were re-elected to represent Voting Region One, which covers the Panhandle. **Daniel Berglund** of Wharton County will continue to serve in Voting Region Four – covering the Coastal Bend.

The Texas Department of Agriculture ratified the results of the elections Thursday, March, 19.

The five board members were sworn in on April 1, 2020, during TCPB's spring board meeting by Patrick Dudley, Texas Department of Agriculture. Each person elected will serve a 6-year term, or until the year 2026.

Additionally, **Hagen Hunt** of Hale County was appointed and sworn in to fill a vacant Voting Region Two seat with a term expiring in 2022.

The Texas Corn Producers Board is a statewide board dedicated to furthering research, education, promotion and marketing opportunities for the Texas corn industry. A voluntary checkoff program provides our organization with the funds required to enhance and grow the Texas corn industry.

The state is divided into five separate "voting regions" to ensure TCPB board seats best reflect corn production across the state, so corn farmers' interests are adequately represented. There are 15 board seats on TCPB; the voting regions are designed for each seat to represent 1/15th of the total corn production in Texas, as reported by the Texas Crop Reporting Service. A complete list of board members is available online at www.TexasCorn.org.

News releases and legal notices on the elections were sent to major newspapers in the regions where elections were held. The voting period was from Jan. 13-27, 2020.

The next election will be in 2022.

Crop conference coverage

After many farm shows, several flights and countless miles traveled, Texas Corn Producers (TCP) team members have covered ground from the Rio Grande Valley to the top of the Texas Panhandle and nearly everywhere in between attending crop conferences, farm shows and more.

TCP sees value in sponsoring and attending these meetings because of the opportunity to engage with farmers, hear their perspective and issues in their region, and support the programs that keep our farmers informed on pertinent issues. Through these events, farmers are able to earn required continuing education units (CEUs), stay up to date on the latest technology and research in the field, and network with fellow agriculturists in their areas.

Bryce White, the TCP producer relations director, talked about the benefits of traveling near and far to meet with farmers from around the state.

"These events allow us to have face-to-face contact with the men and women supporting TCP through their checkoff funds and association membership," White said. "This helps us get to know the needs of Texas produc-

ers, as well as show producers what we are working on for them daily."

Topics ranged from pest control to eminent domain; here were a couple hot topics from the most recent ag meetings:

WHIP

Farmers face the unpredictability of Mother Nature every growing season. In effort to protect producers from natural disasters such as wildfires, droughts, floods and hurricanes from hindering harvests, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented the Wildlife Hurricane Indemnity Program (WHIP) in certain counties. In unfortunate circumstances when a county makes a disaster declaration, WHIP enrolls farmers in a payment program that offsets crop loss, which allows them to move forward to the next growing season. For more information on the WHIP program, visit farmers.gov.

Farm Economy

Economic conversations at ag meetings revolved around the extended periods of low commodity prices, impacts from continual trade disruptions, and weather challenges from

hail, flooding and drought.

With ARC and PLC election deadlines creeping up, speakers helped farmers decide between their options by touching on market-specific information, as well as showing them how to utilize the farm bill decision tool.

Because of phase one of the new trade deal with China, and United States and Mexico Trade Agreement (USMCA) recently coming to fruition, White says there is not enough data to show what the average farmer can expect out of the upcoming markets and commodity prices.

Despite the optimistic outlook that came with the dawn of a new decade, COVID-19 unveiled itself in recent weeks to be the biggest bur in the side of the already struggling economy. Regardless, producers are continuing to keep their noses to the grindstone and their glasses half full to keep products on shelves and fuel in tanks.

The TCP team looks forward to seeing and hearing from our farmers in upcoming months as field days are planned to see crop progress. For more information on upcoming events and opportunities, visit TexasCorn.org.

THE VOICE: Association News

A note from the President...



Wesley Spurlock
TCPA President
Stratford, Texas

In tumultuous times like our nation's been through in recent weeks, the necessity for the work of associations such as Texas Corn Producers Association (TCPA) shines even more apparent. Farmers need a voice at the

table in Washington, D.C. and Austin as important decisions are made that could impact our livelihoods and the future of our farms.

Just before the coronavirus pandemic took grips in America, I joined farmers and staff from fellow corn associations in D.C. to visit with legislators, agencies, industry allies and others with shared interests. During these visits, I had the opportunity to discuss the future of an important industry to our markets as a whole: ethanol. In visits with legislators, legislative staff and others we shared the role ethanol has to play in being a piece of the nation's climate change solution as a renewable, clean-burning fuel.

As the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) is in place and functioning in a positive way to encourage use of this important renewable fuel source, as farmers with an interest in the market we must look to the future of where this market can grow. Our visits included discussions about how ethanol can contribute to low carbon initia-

tive and offer a high-octane solution for the nation's energy. There's much work to be done to continue encouraging growth for the ethanol industry, as well as other efforts for agriculture and rural America – and TCPA continues to work to advocate on behalf of our industry in many ways.

As the country's focus has turned to coronavirus, many consumers are getting a firsthand reminder of the role farmers and agriculture play in their daily lives. TCPA is keeping regular communication with state and federal officials and legislators to ensure farmers have the support and tools they need to continue growing the food to put on plates across the nation.

Should you experience any issues as we navigate through the uncharted waters of this pandemic, please reach out to TCPA so we can assist. You can visit with a board member in your region, contact staff directly, or email the TCPA office at info@texascorn.org.

Association holds annual meeting, elects leadership

Texas Corn Producers Association (TCPA) held its annual meeting Jan. 7, 2020, at the Cattleman's Steakhouse in Fort Worth, Texas.

The evening including an overview of advocacy efforts at the national level from National Corn Growers Association President Kevin Ross of Iowa. Ross discussed overarching issues impacting corn farmers regardless of where they farm.

TCPA President Wesley Spurlock, of Stratford, briefed members on the efforts of the state association on their behalf. Spurlock touched on efforts calling for maintaining and growing trade relations, as well as supporting ethanol market opportunities.

Spurlock also shared the success of TCPA's Leadership, Activism, Networking, and Development (LAND) program in equipping emerging leaders in the industry with the skills

they need to grow as advocates for agriculture and get involved. He also touched on the association's soon to be launched Stand Network. Through this grassroots program, members will have the opportunity to get more involved in the political process by participating in meetings with their elected officials, submitting comments to agencies and participating in other politically-based opportunities as they become available.

Texas corn farmers also elected leadership for the association at the meeting, which was held in conjunction with its January board meeting.

Five board members with expiring terms were re-elected to serve the association for another 3-year term:

- **Robert Gordon**, At Large
- **Mark Howard**, At Large
- **Hagen Hunt**, At Large
- **Charles Ring**, At Large

- **Jim Sugarek**, At Large.

During its board meeting, the association board appointed **Kyla Hamilton** of Shallowater to the vacant Region 2 seat.

The board also re-elected officers for the organization:

- **President**
 Wesley Spurlock, Sherman Co.
- **Vice President**
 Charles Ring, San Patricio Co.
- **Secretary/Treasurer**
 Jim Sugarek, Bee Co.

These officers and board members work together to advocate for Texas corn farmers in D.C. and Austin. Additionally, they work with elected officials on a variety of issues from farm program implementation to crop insurance to property and water rights.

Investing in innovation

Through investments in research, Texas Corn Producers Board (TCPB) is on the frontlines of innovation for corn producers. Subject areas of biological controls, corn breeding, irrigation, production and management, and policy implications are being investigated by teams of farmers and researchers across the state.

Every winter, the checkoff board meets with researchers to review and fund projects that matter most to Texas producers. After establishing criteria for proposals during the summer board meeting, TCPB puts out a request for proposals in the fall for the upcoming year. Open to researchers from universities, industry, private firms and/or farmers, TCPB is able to support a robust research program that yields meaningful results.

“When deciding on what gets funded, our main objective is making an investment that fulfills statewide and regional goals. We hear from producers about problems they are facing and direct funding to the projects that farmers can expect to see a return on,” TCPB Research Committee Chairman Charles Ring said.

This year, the research committee reviewed nearly 25 different proposals and chose to fund 13 of them.

Biological Controls

- Michael Brewer, Ph.D., received funding to investigate multiple biological products' effectiveness on dryland corn fields in the southern regions of Texas. This project will provide producers with data on any measurable effects of these products, in addition to the economic value they can provide.
- Ken Obasa, Ph.D., received funding to investigate the benefit of utilizing biological controls to mitigate toxigenic *Fusarium* pathogens, as well as observe any effect those biologics could have on grain yield and quality. Obasa expects to identify a bacteria strain that shows potential for mitigating fumonisin production. Due to the potential benefit to producers in similar environments, corn checkoffs in Colorado and Kansas have partnered with TCPB on this project.

Irrigation

- Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., received funding to evaluate grain yield and water use on certain hybrid lines when planted at different dates. The goal of this project is to determine which planting dates need the least amount of water to develop quality yields.
- Katie Lewis, Ph.D., received funding to evaluate the impacts of cover crop implementation and crop rotations on soil health and function, crop water use efficiency and economic feasibility of this type of system. Working with farmer volunteers on the High Plains, Lewis will build on previous years' progress to further evaluate the benefits for producers.

Production and Management

- Headed by Rick Auckerman, Deaf Smith County Ag Committee will continue the seasonal moth trapping project in the Texas High Plains. Utilizing pheromone traps, Auckerman and cooperators will be able to provide real-time information to area producers about the presence and moth flights of Southwestern Corn Borer, Western Bean Cutworm, and Fall Armyworms across the plains.
- David Drake, Ph.D., received funding to investigate the return on investment for corn producers in Northeast Texas utilizing phosphorus to improve soil fertility. Drake will take deep soil samples to determine phosphorous levels, then test yield responses and economic viability of various phosphorus application rates.
- David Kerns, Ph.D., received funding for two projects. The first project will evaluate corn earworm resistance to all Bt corn traits. This project builds on previous studies of other Bt traits but will emphasize analysis on corn with Vip3A.
- Kerns also received funding to investigate the effectiveness of Bt traits, in addition to in-

secticide seed treatments and in-furrow insecticide applications, for control of Mexican and southern corn rootworms. In addition, Kerns will evaluate the effectiveness of variable rates of seed treatments against the rootworms.

- Ronnie Schnell, Ph.D., received funding to evaluate management practices that can be used to manage resistant weeds. The study will investigate direct practices such as herbicide treatments and indirect practices such as cover crops. Italian ryegrass will be a focal point of this study.

Corn Breeding

Three projects concerning corn breeding will be led by Seth Murray, Ph.D., and Wenwei Xu, Ph.D., with the corn division of the Texas A&M AgriLife Plant Breeding program. Through these projects, the researchers expect to develop and improve genetic lines that perform well in Texas' different environments. In addition, the researchers will look into corn lines that have improved drought and heat tolerance, improving their ability to be resistant to the fall armyworm and fusarium ear rot. With industry corn breeding programs happening outside the state, this provides data relevant to Texas producers.

Additional Projects

Based on the 2005 publication of “Texas Corn Production Emphasizing Pest Management and Irrigation” by Texas A&M AgriLife, TCPB will work with AgriLife to update and revise the 15-year-old publication for ease of use by producers around the state.

For more information about research funded this year and in previous years, visit TexasCorn.org or contact Producer Relations Director Bryce White. 🍌

2019 bin buster yields for some farmers

National Corn Yield Contest winners announced

Results from the 2019 National Corn Yield Contest are in and they will have you sharpening your competitive edge for next year.

The 55-year-old contest is designed to introduce new creations and information that will further progress the corn industry, all while bringing friendly competition to the fields. The growing need for agriculturists to feed, fuel, clothe and shelter the world is ever-growing. This contest introduces another tangible incentive for producers to innovate and improve their crops to creatively boost production per acre to meet those needs.

Farmers have 27 opportunities to win in nine production categories. While there is not an overall contest winner, the biggest harvester in all categories topped out at 616.1953 bushels per acre, which doubled the overall production average. Texas Corn Producers (TCP) congratulates the state and national winners in those competitive categories.

From Texas, first place winners included **Todd Kimbrell**, of Hillsboro, in the conventional non-irrigated category with 233.2711 bushels per acre; **Brian Fink**, of Cost, in the strip-, min-, mulch, ridge-till non-irrigated category with 174.9076 bushels per acre; and **Tommy and Valerie Car-**

trite, of Sunray, in the conventional irrigated category harvesting 313.4765 bushels per acre.

Winners will receive recognition in National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) Corn Yield Guide, cash trips, or other awards supplied by sponsoring seed, chemical and crop protection companies.

Winners were also honored during the 2020 Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas.

Brandon Hunnicutt, Chair of NCGA's Engaging Members Committee, touched on the positive impacts this contest has on member engagement and the industry as a whole.

"For many entrants, the National Corn Yield Contest introduces them to NCGA membership for the first time," Hunnicutt said, "But this is, more often than not, just the initial step in a fulfilling journey. Their involvement and support increases as they discover the extensive range of



impactful activities NCGA carries out to create and maintain opportunities for corn farmers. As the contest brings together farmers to create and innovate for the good of the industry, NCGA's grassroots efforts create positive change and real opportunities by amplifying the impact of each member's voice as they join together."

Interested in participating in the 2020 contest? All TCP members are eligible to compete. Complete details are available online at ncga.com/get-involved/national-corn-yield-contest.

State Rankings

Rank	Entrant Name	City	Hybrid Brand	Number	Yield
Division A: Non-Irrigated					
1	Todd Kimbrell, Jr.	Itasca	DEKALB	DKC67-99	233.2711
2	Justin N Hansen	Lorena	Dyna-Gro	D57VP51	218.0985
3	Keith Kresta	Wharton	Pioneer	P1847VYHR	201.4865
Division E: Strip, Min, Mulch, Ridge-Till Non-Irrigated					
1	Brian Fink	Cost	Pioneer	P1366YHR	174.9076
Division I: Irrigated					
1	Tommy & Valerie Cartrite	Sunray	Pioneer	P1828AM™	313.4765
2	Michael Swinburn	Dimmitt	Pioneer	P1366AMXT™	298.4897
3	Jody Bezner	Texline	Pioneer	P1366Q™	284.8486

ODDS *AND* ENDS



COVID-19 impact on agriculture, *continued from p. 1*

As many businesses are operating with a modified or limited labor force, we encourage you to be in touch with your point of contact with dealers. In particular, we encourage planning ahead for motor and equipment maintenance for farm implements, as these businesses have the potential to experience delays.

of supply disruptions for key farm inputs such as seed, fertilizer and pesticides.

As farmers continue farm operations, TCP encourages you to be mindful of social distancing measures. Consider holding your meetings with workers via phone rather than in person.

practices are key as well – wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and cough into your elbow.

Texas farms are open for business – growing the food foundation to feed our communities whatever they may face.

Additional resources and information will continue to be available on TCP’s website, www.TexasCorn.org.

At this time, TCP is not aware

Of course, simple personal hygiene

Bring agriculture into stay-at-home classroom

Many families are adjusting to a new “normal” amidst stay-at-home orders and school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Texas teachers are adjusting to distance learning and Texas parents are learning the role of academic teacher for their own children – for some, the remainder of the school year.

preschool to late elementary students that are sure to be fun for all ages. These FREE printables include a corn plastic experiment, plant lifecycle activities, word games, color pages and more!

complete classroom curriculum resources meet state standards from a foundation of core educational Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills. The complete Corn in the Classroom curriculum is available at no cost to any educator – whether you’re a professional or learning to be one in light of current circumstance.

Texas Corn Producers (TCP) has developed a new “Educational Resources” page on its website, TexasCorn.org, to offer activities and learning resources to teachers and parents alike. There are activities for

TCP’s educational resources are easy, fun ways for students (as well as parents and teachers) to learn about corn and its role in our daily lives - all while building on essential reading and science skills.

Visit TexasCorn.org today to discover many exciting ways to enable Texas students to find out the important role of agriculture!

Additionally, TCP recently launched its Corn in the Classroom curriculum for Kindergarten - 5th grade. These

TCP welcomes administrative intern

Kaysen Queener is a freshman at Texas Tech University and has just joined TCP as its administrative intern.

Queener says that her future plans involve working in the agricultural industry and believes being at Texas Corn Producers is a great start!

She is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in agricultural communications. Queener is from Texico, N.M., where she was always involved in the FFA, National Honor Society (NHS) and other programs in her high school. Currently, she serves as a New Mexico state FFA officer.

TCP’s longstanding internship program for local students offers an opportunity for aspiring agriculturists to gain insight on the agricultural industry, while honing the skills they learn through their higher education. TCP internships are a valuable career-building experience for students to further develop their agricultural industry knowledge and professional skills. The program offers focused experiences in both communications and administration. Those interested in a future internship should email info@texascorn.org for information.

Queener’s family has always been active in the livestock industry which allowed her to show market hogs for nine years.

Queener says she looks forward to gaining insight in the crop industry through her internship, and looks forward to honing her professional skills as she looks to be an asset to the agricultural industry.



Directors

Daniel Berglund, Wharton Co.

Jarret Bowers, Hartley Co.

Colin Chopelas, Nueces Co.

Dustin Dickerson, Hidalgo Co.

Robert Gordon, Hartley Co.

Braden Gruhlkey, Randall Co.

Kyla Hamilton, Lubbock Co.

Mark Howard, Hartley Co.

Hagen Hunt, Hale Co.

Todd Kimbrell, Hill Co.

Aaron Martinka, Milam Co.

Larry Mason, Dallam Co.

Joe Reed, Swisher Co.

Charles Ring, San Patricio Co.

Wesley Spurlock, Sherman Co.

Jim Sugarek, Bee Co.

Max Swinburn, Castro Co.

Bart Thoreson, Sherman Co.

Dee Vaughan, Moore Co.

Bruce Wetzel, Grayson Co.

Steve Yoder, Dallam Co.

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Upcoming Events

As the COVID-19 situation is still fluid, there are many events moving online or being postponed. Visit www.TexasCorn.org for the most up-to-date list of industry meetings and other upcoming events.

Aug. 25-27 | TCP Board Meetings | Lubbock
Sept. 11-13 | LAND Program | Fort Worth

Support our Corporate Members



Learn how you can become a corporate member at
www.TexasCorn.org