



# VATAT

## News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2012 Volume III, Issue X

## “From the Duck Blind”

By: *Russell Thomas, Gilmer*

As the school year comes to a close, I want to congratulate all the State CDE and National CDE winners. I know you all have put in much time, effort and miles to have your students be successful. The students learn life lessons and memories they will treasure all their life.

As we were driving home from the State Poultry contest at Texas A&M, I recalled my time on these judging trips as a high school student. Times and the contests have changed. I was on the Dairy Products Team - spitting milk and cottage cheese, milk sediment pads and identifying types of cheese. The lessons, memories and friendships still remain with me to this day. I hope my students will feel the same in 30 years!

It reminds me a lot of my hunting trips; I remember the trips, memories and friendships formed during those times, as well as remembering the lessons learned, such as making sure the plug is in your shotgun while waterfowl hunting. Ouch, that lesson cost me! Funny things may have happened, trophies won, enjoyed God's nature or forgetting to reload the gun as a big group of ducks are “cupped and committed” are just a few of the memories.

As the summer begins, I am excited about the opportunities it holds for us as agricultural science

teachers. One of my favorite activities is the conference. This year it will be held in Amarillo, giving us the opportunity to travel to the Texas Panhandle. As an agricultural science teacher, I feel this is one of the most important facets of teaching. New teaching methods, new curriculum ideas, certifications, updates from TEA, Texas FFA and the Foundation are just a few of the benefits of attending the conference.

This is a time for me to reload for the upcoming year and become the best agricultural science teacher I can for my students and the community. I hope you feel the same way and have made plans to attend this valuable opportunity we have as teachers.

I am very fortunate to have administrators who understand the importance of our conference and provide me the opportunity to attend, which I know most of us have this type of support from our administration. However, I realize some of you do not. If you are in that situation, let's be proactive about the conference. Visit with administrators, show them a schedule and use the poster provided by the FFA Foundation to promote the conference. Call a VATAT board member, myself or Barney, and let us visit with your administration to provide additional support and information on the importance of the conference.

I'm really looking forward to



the conference; you will see a few changes in the schedule. There are some great workshops planned and dynamic speakers.

Bring your spouse and children, because Amarillo has some great sights to see and enjoy. My wife has been working on the spouses program and is planning a community service project to provide some assistance to

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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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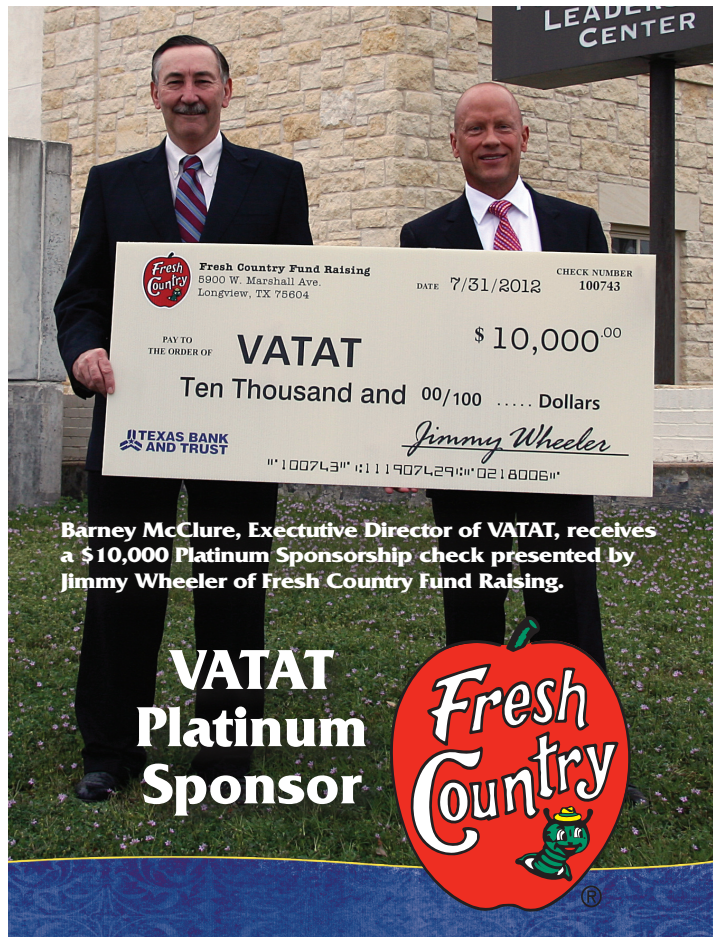
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## "From the Duck Blind"

*Continued from page 1*

the Amarillo area. Have your spouse come to registration and sign up for the luncheon to become involved with the other spouses during the conference.

Also, while you are attending take time to participate in the golf tournament or roping and help the VATAT scholarship fund while getting to know other agricultural science teachers from across the state.

This conference gives us a chance to reload and to be loaded when we start the new school year. I can't wait to see you there! Remember to continue to pray for our country, leaders, rain, students and our service men and women and may our God continue to protect and bless you and your family.



**Prize Package Drawing**  
**Benefiting the VATAT Scholarship Fund**  
**\$5/ticket or 5 for \$20**

This year, RiverStar Farms and the VATAT offer you more chances to win one of four exceptional prize packages, along with several other prizes including the second place prize of a small animal scale from WW-Paul Scales and \$50 cash or gift card! The 10 winning tickets will be drawn, as before, and each winning ticket holder will select a filled balloon. Once each ticket holder has his or her balloon, each person will pop the balloon to reveal the prize inside. One winner will get to choose from the following packages...

***South Texas Deer Hunt for Two***  
***Livestock Equipment Package***  
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***Las Vegas Trip for Two***

Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Tickets can be purchased during FFA Convention and VATAT Conference at the RiverStar Farms booth. Tickets cost \$5 each or \$20 for five tickets. All funds collected will be donated by RiverStar Farms to benefit the VATAT Scholarship Fund. The winner will be drawn at the VATAT Conference during Family Night. Anyone is eligible; need not be present to win. View descriptions of each package at [www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org) under Conference>VATAT Activities.

## Administrators - Friends or Foes?

*Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director*

Depending on the situation, your administrative supervisor can be your greatest asset or your worst nightmare. The last few months have brought many calls concerning evaluations and proper oversight of agricultural programs. By nature of my job, I hear of more problem situations than great ones. There are many more good situations than there are bad, but I just don't seem to get those calls.

School laws allow administrators to non-renew probationary contract holders with little recourse by the teacher. Even teachers holding term contracts may find themselves put on intervention plans, and then returned to probationary status the next year. If done according to the law, and fairly, these actions ensure accountability for everyone. The problem comes when administrators develop a negative impression of the teacher or program. What can you do?

The main issue here is communication. An administrator needs to see the program as you see it, not the way a disgruntled parent sees it. Develop a clear vision for your program and then share it with your administration. A long range plan, yearly plan and a day-to-day plan are items that should be covered. Involve them in discussions of these plans and really listen to their input. It might surprise you to learn that some activities you do, which are really time-consuming, may not be priorities to your supervisor. On the other hand, some activities you don't consider a priority may be very important to them.

An agricultural teacher knows more about our program than most administrators, and this allows you an avenue to provide justification for certain activities. Administrators today are more responsive to parental complaints than ever before, so it is imperative they know how your program operates and be on board with it.

I know of some administrators who are champions for their agriculture departments. The best ones understand how programs operate and understand that there are many facets to the job. Just because an administrator is a former CTE teacher, or even an agricultural teacher, doesn't mean they will be better for your program. I have worked for outstanding administrators who came from other backgrounds. The best administrators cared about

*Continued on page 4*

# Administrators - Friends or Foes?

*Continued from page 3*

the students and teachers and appreciated successful programs. At times we have to play the hand we are dealt.

Whether your administrator is your friend or foe depends on many variables - part depends on them and part depends on you. Be pro-active and sell your program at every opportunity. As their confidence in your program increases, administrators will be less likely to question every decision you make. Have a good summer.



## VATAT TRIVIA

***Post the answer on our Facebook wall!***

How can you help improve your administrations' view of your agricultural program?

## *Teach Ag Campaign Recognizes Three Agricultural Educators With Outstanding Contribution Award*

The National Teach Ag Campaign, in cooperation with the National FFA Organization, recently recognized three agricultural educators for their impact on the profession of agricultural education at the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) conference in Atlanta.

Dr. Alvin Larke, Jr, Dr. Antoine Alston and Dr. Dexter Wakefield have spent their careers serving the agricultural education profession. They have had tremendous influence in every area, from recruiting new agricultural education professionals, teaching the craft and mentoring those already in the profession.

Dr. Larke is a professor in the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications department at Texas A&M where he focuses on teacher education, youth mentoring, diversity and the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups in agriculture.

"I want to impact the next generation of learners," said Dr. Larke. He cites the influence his agriculture teachers had on him, and says he sees every new class of potential agricultural educators as impacting the next generation of learners - a continuous cycle.

Dr. Alston is professor and interim associate dean, Academic Studies, in the school of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at North Carolina A&T State University.

Dr. Wakefield is an associate professor in the department of Plant, Soil Science and Agricultural Systems at Southern Illinois University.

"The guidance of these men will help move agricultural education to where it needs to be in the next decade and beyond," said Ellen Thompson, National Teach Ag

Campaign Coordinator. "They understand the needs of today's learners and teachers, and have the vision to help us all achieve growth in agricultural education."

"These men are great leaders and educators who have been planting the seeds for global success for generations. They have invested in education and their reach stretches around the world," said Erica Flores, National FFA Organization Diversity and Inclusion coordinator.

The Outstanding Contribution award is designed to highlight individuals who have had a tremendous impact on the agricultural education profession through service, mentorship, and leadership.



L-R: Dr. Alvin Larke Jr., Dr. Antoine Alston, Dr. Dexter Wakefield

# A New Face in Team Ag Ed



Callie McNulty, VATAT summer intern, is a sophomore at Texas A&M University where she is majoring in agricultural communications and journalism with a minor in English.

As a student, she has obtained valuable communication skills while serving on the Aggie Muster Committee, assisting in planning efforts and raising awareness for the university's time honored tradition. McNulty has also been involved with the Aggie Recruitment Committee and Freshman Leadership Organization through the Student Government Association.

McNulty, a 2010 graduate from Cleburne High School, was active in FFA activities ranging from exhibiting livestock to serving as a member of the State Championship Radio Broadcasting team.

"This internship will provide me a great learning experience," McNulty said. "I have a strong passion for agriculture, teachers, communication and FFA."

## VATAT Conference Information

### Workshops

Registration for pre-conference workshops will close **July 12**, unless otherwise noted. Onsite registration will be available for remaining spots.

### VATAT Activities

Check the VATAT's website for information pertaining to conference activities - Family Night, Spouses' Luncheon, roping, golf tournament, family activities, awards ceremony, and more!

### *If you are retiring this year...*

Please contact the VATAT office if you are retiring, or if you know of someone who is retiring after this year. We strive to keep our records accurate and would also like to honor members who are retiring from teaching agriculture science. Thank you for your help with this matter.

An advertisement for DJ\$ Fundraising of Texas. The background is a collage of various food items including a whole roasted chicken, cookies with colorful candies, a plate of ribs, and a sausage. Overlaid on the center is a large, stylized logo of the state of Texas in black and red, with the letters 'DJ\$' in white and red. Below the logo is a banner that reads 'FUNDRAISING OF TEXAS'. At the bottom of the ad, it says 'PROVIDING TOP QUALITY FUNDRAISING PRODUCTS' and provides the website 'WWW.DJS-TEXAS.COM' and phone number '866-484-3589'.

Follow the VATAT on:  & 



# Outstanding Agriculture Science Students Recognized at Best of Texas Awards

Texas career and technical education students and community leaders were recognized Monday, April 30, 2012, at the annual Best of Texas Awards Ceremony. The Dawson, Gilmer and Bellville FFA Chapters had members recognized as Outstanding Agriculture Science Students. Haylee Kimbriel, Dawson FFA member, and Ashley Williams, Gilmer FFA member, were named the Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Students runners-up. Samuel Luedeker, Bellville FFA member, was named the Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Student winner. A cash scholarship and commemorative plaque were presented to the winner and runners-up.

The awards ceremony was held at 10:00 a.m. at the William B. Travis Building in Austin. The Best of Texas festivities kicked-off with a breakfast reception and award recipients were treated to lunch at the Capitol

Grill following the ceremony.

The Best of Texas Awards, sponsored by the Texas Career and Technology Council (TCTC), were initiated to recognize outstanding achievements by students enrolled in career and technical education, and exemplary contributions by businesses and community leaders who have dedicated their support to career and technical programs. School districts throughout Texas submitted nominations in 11 awards categories.

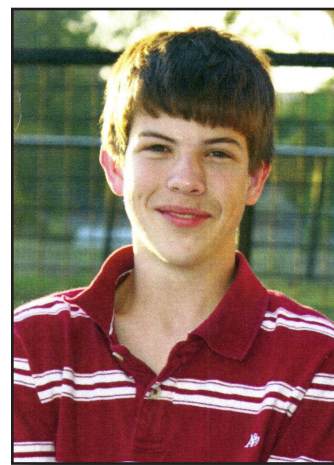
The TCTC is an organization representing seven professional organizations of career and technical education. TCTC strives to maintain one unified voice, speaking for and supporting career and technical programs. For more information, please visit [www.texascareerandtechnology.org](http://www.texascareerandtechnology.org).



Bubba Norman (right), Texas Technology and Engineering Educators chairperson-elect, presents Haylee Kimbriel (left) with the Best of Texas Award.



Bubba Norman (right), Texas Technology and Engineering Educators chairperson-elect, presents Ashley Williams (left) with the Best of Texas Award.



Samuel Luedeker was named Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Student winner.

## TCTC Affiliations

- Family & Consumer Sciences Teachers Association of Texas
- Marketing Educators of Texas
- Texas Business Technology Educators Association
- Texas Health Occupations Association
- Texas Industrial Vocational Association
- Texas Technology and Engineering Educators
- Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas

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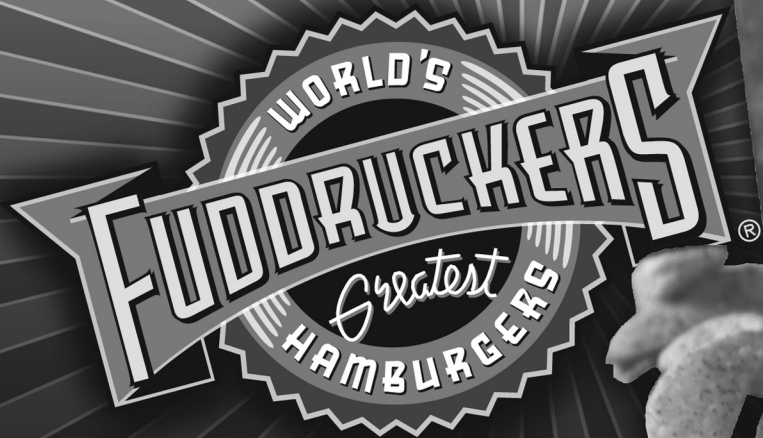
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# Texas FFA *Update*

## From the Travel Team

Leadership is a key component to any agricultural program and FFA chapter, as well as the officer team. The Travel Team acquired a firsthand look at the vital role teachers play in that leadership development.

“The Texas FFA believes wholeheartedly in the Travel Team program. Not only does it allow thousands of FFA members to have personal interaction with the State FFA Officers, but it allows our State Officers to witness the incredible things that take place each day in our local programs. The chapter is truly the heart of the FFA organization, and we appreciate that teachers and students open their schools each day to our officers,” said Austin Large, Leadership Development Coordinator.

State FFA President Peyton Gilbert and State FFA First Vice President Taylor Shackelford had the opportunity to visit numerous schools and develop personal relationships with teachers and FFA members across the Lone Star State.

“I model my leadership as a mentor, friend and teacher after some of the teachers I have met while visiting schools,” Gilbert said. “Teachers are an inspiration and the rock which students can rest on.”

“I value the excitement and energy that the teachers have in the classroom. It’s contagious,” Shackelford explained. “On behalf of the almost 87,000 members of the Texas FFA, this great organization would not be possible without the teachers and the relationships they foster with their students.”

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TEXAS FFA STATE CONVENTION  
JULY 9-13, 2012**



# Foundation Update

*A Great Way to say Thank You*

Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director

Life is not a solo project. Someone, somewhere, somehow along our life’s journey provided a word of encouragement, shared a prayer of support, took a moment to lend an ear or simply held our hand in a moment of loss. For more than 84-years, Texas agricultural education and FFA has provided our students, teachers, parents, supporters and former members with a network of support which can empower, educate and entertain. Wow! We’re talking about life and about people who help us along our way. How important are these influential people, mentors, comforters and motivators in our lives? The Texas FFA Foundation has a great way for you to “honor” them while also supporting the Texas FFA Foundation – strengthening our agricultural education and FFA program today and into the future. Consider taking a moment and sharing an “Honor Gift” today to say “Thank You” to that special someone.

The Texas FFA Foundation has launched an annual individual giving program referred to as **“The Experience.”** The program is designed to provide a way to honor the positive difference others have made in your life – or that of others. **“The Experience”** initiative is conducted annually during National FFA Week, the annual Texas FFA convention and in November as we share the harvest of Thanksgiving.

We are looking for people to “honor” during the **“The Experience”** campaign connected to the upcoming 84th Annual Texas FFA Convention. During convention, more than 2,500 students will be recognized on stage for a job well done. We have much to be thankful for and many who are worthy of honoring.

Thank you for being remarkable. We trust you will choose to honor someone and recognize someone who also inspired you.

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# Texas FFA Alumni

# Update

## Going...Going...Gone

*Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President*

I hope this article will be short and to the point. Just a reminder, the Texas FFA Alumni holds its annual meeting and auction every year during the State FFA Convention. The auction is the Alumni's primary source of funding for the awards, grants and scholarships that we bestow to worthy candidates.

The auction traditionally has several items that are useful to our industry. Thanks to McCoy's, we are able to offer a squeeze chute, panels, t-post and other miscellaneous items. Rusty Morgan has been graciously donating a scale for several years now. LaQuinta has donated night stays nationwide. Several of our fundraising vendors graciously donate items such as boots, camping equipment and other items. We have had items you can purchase for your spouse to show her or him that you missed them the week of convention (*these can also be purchased to give at a later date to get out of the doghouse*). We have had airline tickets on Southwest Airlines given to us for the auction. Cabela's has been a good sponsor, as well.

The Alumni Auction is for you. Just ask the agriculture teachers that were persuaded (*drug in*) by Liz Treptow last year. Several had not planned to buy anything, yet walked out as a winner. And a big thanks to Jim Prewitt for his continued support.

We are always looking for auction items. So if you would like to contribute to the auction or know of someone who would like to contribute, please feel free to contact me in order to secure it in the auction line-up.

### ALUMNI CHAPTER BASKET CONTEST

You are asked to enter your FFA alumni chapter in the Texas FFA Alumni Chapter Basket Contest. Each alumni chapter may enter one basket. It may have homemade goodies, jellies, items made by local companies, home made items, items from the local ag department, caps, etc.

Baskets should be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 12th. The baskets will be judged on a penny (\$.01) per vote. The basket with the most votes in the 24-hour period will receive the rotating "Basket Winner" plaque. The baskets become the property of the Texas FFA Alumni Association and will be sold in the auction on Thursday evening.

#### CONTEST RULES

1. Baskets need to be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday.
2. A list of the items included in the basket should be clearly labeled on the basket.
3. The basket can be of any creation.

## DEADLINE ...

The deadline for the \$500.00 Grants and Scholarships was June 1st. I hope that you did not let this chance pass you by...Going... Going...Gone...

For more information on the Texas FFA Alumni, go to <http://texasffaalumni.ffa.org>.



# Texas Young Farmers Update

## From the President's Pen

*Connie Koopman, Texas Young Farmers President*

Our most heavenly and gracious Father, we come before you asking for much needed rain for our pastures and grain fields. You know what we do and say before we actually do and say, so you know how we are feeling inside. We were taught to live off what was given to us, but there are times when we need help. Last year the drought played a major role on the farmers financially, and we are still in the drought even though you have blessed us with rain. We are all children of God and if we trust and believe in him, he will take care of us. Father, we need you to take care of our pastures and grain fields now. In your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

Earth Day, observed on April 22, has been around for more than 40 years, and has inspired millions of people to increase their awareness of, and appreciation for, the environment. Since the dawn of the 21st Century, people have increasingly adopted eco-friendly lifestyles and attitudes, as well as the continued embrace of environmentally friendly practices and principles.

Nowadays, children grow up learning about the environment in school and at home. For example, many households participate in their community's recycling programs, and households are raising eco-conscious children. Over the last several years, the opportunities to eat in an eco-friendly manner have increased dramatically. Organic foods have grown popular, and parents can use this trend to teach their kids about the environment. When shopping for groceries, select organic products and explain this difference to kids. Shopping locally provides another opportunity for parents to involve food when teaching kids. Explain to kids that shopping locally reduces reliance on fuel, because products don't need to be shipped, be it airborne or on the ground, to your community.

Conservation provides another easy opportunity for parents to instill eco-friendly ideals in their children. Conservation is about reducing waste, so conservation techniques don't involve sacrifice. Instead, they involve being more responsible when using our resources. Parents know full well the constant reminders kids need when addressing



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dental hygiene. Use these daily reminders about brushing and flossing as an opportunity to impart a lesson about the environment. Instead of keeping the faucet running while brushing your teeth, turn the faucet off and encourage kids to do the same. Explain that this helps conserve water, and show them how it's just as easy and effective to clean teeth without the water running, as it is when the faucet is on.

When grocery shopping, always make a list before leaving the house and explain to kids that you do this so you don't have to make two trips to the store and waste the gas that the second trip would require. In addition, encourage kids to turn the lights off when they leave a room to better conserve energy.

Recycling is a practice that many of today's kids grew up with. As a result, many of them might take it for granted, failing to fully realize the positive impact they're making whenever they recycle. If recycling is as natural to kids as breathing, then it's no surprise they might not recognize its impact. A host of products are made from recycled materials, from the paper you put in the printer to the toys under the tree on Christmas morning. Explain to kids why you are choosing these products, and let them know such products would not be possible without their own recycling efforts.

Another way to help kids realize the value of recycling is to make crafts from recycled products. For instance, make a paper mache globe to celebrate Earth Day by using old newspapers as your primary material. Such lessons show kids their efforts make an impact and increase the likelihood they will continue this eco-friendly lifestyle well into adulthood. It will also preserve our Earth for longer continued use for whatever the future holds.

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### ***Young Farmer Information***

On Saturday, July 21, the Summer Picnic will be held in Sugarland. The State Board will meet at the Marriott to hold their meeting beginning at 9 am. I hope the National Planning Committee will hold an update meeting that day to but I have not yet heard.

Everyone is invited to George Bush Park to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and family fun. The American Shooting Range is located at this park and is available for anyone who wants to take on a fellow young farmer member in a friendly competition.

There is also a hike and bike trail, a model airplane field, an equestrian trail and a dog park.

Members may begin arriving at 1 p.m. and the meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. My husband, Allen, and I will be donating pork steaks and are asking members to bring a side dish. There are pits located throughout the park and the steaks will be cooked just prior to the meal being served. There is a pavilion located in the park where will be dining.

The Marriott is also the host hotel for our January State Convention and is offering us double points for anyone who stays there this weekend. The price is \$99 a night, and reservations need to be made on an individual basis.

Also, in July I will be traveling to Corpus Christi to attend the State FFA Convention and to Amarillo to attend the VATAT Conference. The Texas Young Farmers will have a booth set up at both of these functions, so if you have any questions come by our booth and visit with me. If you want to start a new chapter in your area, call Don Beene or I and we will be happy to assist you in getting your chapter started. Remember, we are not here to teach the kids and take over your classroom. We are here to provide adult education and support your FFA program.

Thank you for taking time to read this article. Also, live, love and laugh.

Blessings to all.

For more information on the Texas  
Young Farmers, visit:  
<http://www.txyoungfarmers.org>

Discover how our Association can  
benefit you. Please do not hesitate to  
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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

### June 2012

**2nd-5th** - State Leadership Conference

**6th** - State Officer Selection Interviews and Testing

**7th** - State Scholarship Selection

**7th-8th** - State degree check

**8th** - Texas FFA Board of Directors Meeting

### July 2012

**2nd** - National FFA Band and Chorus applications due

**9th-13th** - State FFA Convention, Coprus Christi

**30th - Aug 3rd** - VATAT Professional Development Conference

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 of Texas

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### 2012 State Fair Validation Dates

The late tag orders are \$11.00 from May 5-June 8, 2012. The priority tag orders must be faxed to 512-476-2894, and the tags are \$11.00 plus \$20.00 priority postage and handling fee from June 9 -15, 2012. All swine must be validated on or before June 30, 2012. Validation chairperson must be present when animals are validated. The change of ownership is due in the FFA office on or before June 30, 2012.

All manila forms, hair envelopes, ethics policies, committee forms and e-mail excel spreadsheets are due in the FFA office on or before July 6, 2012. All information must be in alpha order or it will be returned to the county at the county expense. In regards to tag alterations, any change to size, shape, form or color will void the tag. The tag will be replaced at the event and the replacement cost will be charged to the individual. Ear notch correction and ear tag replacement forms must be faxed (512-476-2894) to the FFA office on or before July 20, 2012. Do not send information after this date, as it will not be accepted.