



VATAT

News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2011 Volume II, Issue VII

"Words with Friends"

By: David Reiley, Seguin

Advisory - 1: Having or exercising power to advise (an advisory council).
2: Containing or giving advice.

Let's take a quick survey; we will do this by a show of hands. How many of you have an advisory committee in place? Okay, thank you, hands down. Now, how many of you have an active advisory committee who supports your program, is up to date on your activities and advocates for you and your FFA program in your school and community? Thank you, you may put your hands down. Now the last question, how many of you use your booster club for an advisory committee? Thank you, you can all put your hands down now.

Having an active advisory committee is probably one of the most important things you can do for your program. Assembling a group of business owners and community members who have a vested interest in your program, who know the value of it and how it benefits the school and community is so important. Selecting the right individuals who know the importance of agriculture, leadership and the FFA can sometimes determine if your program thrives or dies. Your advisory committee can help you determine what the needs are of the community, which in turn can help you decide what classes to teach.

They can also help you by having conversations with school board members and staff, so those people are hearing the program's wants and needs from the community and not just you.

Let's go back to the three questions real quick. The last one is important because many times we think we have an advisory committee since we have a booster club. More often than not, that is not the case. The booster club is there to help you with financial and physical support when you need it. They are there to help you fundraise and to help you set up pens for your chapter show as well as your county livestock show. Some may even help you transport animals to the major shows and run the concession stand at the football games as well. They are a support group which is designed to raise money and support the students.

Take a look at the make up of your booster club. All parents, right? Most parents have an interest in the program because their child is in the FFA, and they want to help the FFA chapter. That help is usually limited to the time the student is in school. Since the group is also fundraising for you, they have an interest in where that money will go and how it will help their child. This is not a bad



thing, but it could cause problems if you decide to use the money differently than they had anticipated. This could cause hard feelings and upset some people who may do more harm than good in the community. They may not be your best advocate, if they do not get something they had been planning on buying or doing for the chapter.

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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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Texas educator named 'Rural Teacher of the Year'



Tracy Denny, an Agriculture Science and Technology teacher, at Chisum High School in Paris, Texas has been named Rural Teacher of the Year by the National Rural Education Association, based at Purdue University.

Denny was born and raised on a local farm and ranch in Detroit, Texas with her parents. She attended K-12 at a local rural school, Prairiland CISD in Pattonville, Texas. Rural life is all that she knew and loved. Tracy accredits her rural raising, rural education, extra-curricular involvement in both the 4-H programs and FFA program, and her high school agriculture instructor, Mr. Bobby Winters, as the reasons she chose to become an agriculture teacher in the rural school setting. Her higher education includes an Associate's Degree from Paris Jr. College, and a Bachelor of Science Degree from East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas. She holds degrees in Secondary Education Agriculture, General Horticulture and Speech Communication for Grades 8-12.

As one of the first female agriculture teachers in Northeast Texas, she has 16 years of teaching experience with all of those at Chisum ISD in Paris, Texas. At Chisum, Tracy has been an Agricultural Science and Technology teacher for 16 years, Life Skills teacher for 13 years, Dual Credit Speech teacher for four years, and an Environmental Science teacher for one year.

Also for the 2010-11 school year, she will be teaching Floral Design as a Dual Credit Fine Arts to help further assist her students. She holds certifications in DCP - Diversified Career Preparation, Floral Design, NCCER - National Center for Construction Education and Research, Parliamentary Procedure, and General Horticulture. She has been a member of VATAT for

16 years.

Denny helps students before school and after school. Principal Tommy Chalaire reports, "The willingness to do whatever it takes for her students is an attitude that permeates from Tracy's classroom." Denny is involved not only at school, but in the community as well by serving as a volunteer to assist community organizations. A former student reported, "Mrs. Denny opened doors of opportunity for me and all of her students that allowed us to have personal growth."

In the Spring of 2009, Denny was selected by her peers as Chisum ISD Secondary Teacher of the year. With this honor, she applied for the Texas Rural Education Association Rural Teacher of the Year. She won this award in June of 2009 and was recognized at their 2009 TREA State Convention.

She was then nominated this year as Texas's Representative for the National Rural Education Association Rural Teacher of the year. One teacher from every state Association was nominated for this award. On September the 11th, Mrs. Diane Stegall, Superintendent of Chisum ISD announced Denny was selected as the NREA National Rural Educator of the Year.

She was recognized at the 2010 NREA National Convention in Branson, Missouri. Denny was one of the convention speakers, met with the U.S. Secretary of Education in a round table discussion, and has been asked to attend the Congressional Hearing in Washington D.C. over Rural Education and its impact.

The Rural Teacher of the Year Award Honorees receives a \$2,000 honorarium, and the school district receives \$1,000 to purchase instructional materials and school supplies. Candidates are nominated by the Texas Rural Education Association, a state affiliate organization of the National Rural Education Association.

The National Rural Education Association was organized in 1907 as a voice for rural teachers and administrators. With affiliates in 42 states, the association represents rural schools at the national level, with members who serve on national educational review panels and coalitions.

Sources: John Hill, Purdue University; Tracy Denny, Agriculture Science and Technology teacher at Chisum High School

“Words with Friends”

Continued from page 1

Sometimes the emotional ties a booster club has, because of who they are, can create problems. With today's economy and budget cuts looming, booster clubs are an essential part of most Agriculture Science programs. However, they should not be used as an advisory committee. The advisory committee needs to be made up of individuals who have businesses in your community and who see the benefits from your program by you providing a quality, educated and responsible student. You should include parents, counselors, administrators and other members of your schools faculty as well as a student. They need to be people who have a vision for the community and who want to improve the quality of life for themselves, the students, the school and the community. They need to be individuals who know your program and can help get your message out to the school board, superintendent and community. Your advisory committee needs to be made up of people who are known for their integrity and who can be trusted to help get the right message out.

These people need to be reliable, dedicated and strong. Strong in the sense that they need to step up and support the program and the needs of the students. They need to be willing to advocate for the program and help decide what direction it needs to be going. Your advisory committee should be diverse with young, experienced, agriculture and non-agriculture related individuals included in its make up. Visit with these individuals often, send them updates on the happenings in your program, let them know about new curriculum and changes in the educational community. Keep them informed!

When selecting members of the advisory committee set up a rotation process. The first time you pick individuals you will need to draw for positions, some will be three-year terms, some two years and then others will serve only a one-year term. This will stagger the terms, so you will have some consistency from year to year. Once things get rolling, everyone will be on staggered three-year terms. Term limitations can be used as well, that all depends on the size of your community and the number of people you have to select from. Speaking of size, don't over do it and have a huge group that is too hard to manage. Again depending on the size of your community, a good size would be eight to 10 people, smaller if dictated by your surroundings.

You can get more information about advisory committees on the VATAT Web site under the Teachers Toolbox>Resources>Advisory Committee Tools. Be sure to check out the PowerPoint, it has some great information in it. Oh and one last thing, did I mention having an advisory committee is required by law? Just thought I would throw that out there. Good luck, and safe travels as you begin your CDE season.

Teachers...

Gerald Young, VATAT Executive Director

We all know the purpose of school is to educate students. We also know a school is only as good as the teachers in the school. We can all remember a great teacher we have had. If we were asked, “What made that teacher great?” we would have differing answers. My answer would be heart. How do you measure heart? This is a very difficult question to answer, but I would like to try.

Heart begins when a teacher is teaching because it is what he or she wants to do and enjoys doing. Heart is when the teacher puts student-learning first. The teacher is not satisfied unless all the students are learning. To do this, the teacher must have a genuine compassion for each and every student he or she teaches. In my December article, I wrote about the student asking the question in Dr. Harrell's graduate class. By Dr. Harrell treating the question as if it were the most important question of the day, he showed an example of having compassion for each student.

We hear stories all the time about professors or teachers who say, no matter what they do, “Not all of the students in my class will pass this course.” This is an example of a teacher who is more interested in student-failure than success. You might hear of a teacher in a faculty meeting bragging about the number of students who failed that six weeks. This does not sound like a teacher with heart. I am not saying if a student fails it is always the teacher's fault. I am saying teachers should really care; they should be concerned about any student who has failed. Teachers should try to find the reason for that failure, and if they can, help the student make the changes needed for the student to be successful. I do realize there are students that, no matter what you do, choose to fail.

Every student teacher I supervised on the first test they developed and gave, most of the students failed. It was not because the student teacher did not care; it was because they did not know where their students were. They were also use to college type testing. The students were not familiar with that type of test. Those students had become use to an in-service teacher and that teacher's method of teaching and testing. This is why it is so important for teachers to really get to know the students and the personality of each of their classes. I am not saying we water down tests to make sure everyone passes, but what I am saying is make sure your students understand the material and your

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Teachers...

Continued from page 3

testing system.

Teachers should always push and challenge their students, but they first have to find out where those students are and where to begin. It is difficult for today's teacher when you have students of all knowledge levels. How do you challenge the high achievers without boring the low achievers and vice versa? The great teachers do not complain about their circumstances and the diversity of the class. They find a way to make it work for everyone. Make learning a priority; make learning fun, and never quit learning yourself.

VATAT Scholarship

The Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association offers VATAT scholarships to members' children upon their graduation from high school. Scholarships are awarded to all eligible applicants as long as VATAT membership requirements are met, and the application meets all scholarship requirements.

Download a scholarship application at www.vatat.org under Association>VATAT Awards. The completed application and supporting materials must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2011, and sent to the VATAT office. Late applications will not be accepted.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR PASSWORD?

Make registering for workshops easier this summer by knowing your email address and password for the VATAT Online System. VATAT members will also renew their membership through VATAT Online, so it is imperative you know the required login information. The Association cannot see your personal password, so in the event you cannot remember your login information your password will have to be reset.

Agricultural Science Teachers: TOOT YOUR HORNS!

Agricultural science teachers are the world's worst about "tooting their own horns," so to speak. This is evident every year when several VATAT Awards go unawarded simply because a teacher did not take a few minutes to fill out the VATAT Nomination Form. VATAT Awards are a great way to receive the recognition teachers deserve after a year's worth of hard work and commitment to his/her agricultural science program. Don't be shy about stepping up and taking credit for all that's been accomplished this year!

There are several categories in which to nominate yourself, your chapter and individuals or businesses that have helped make this year a success. It is the VATAT's goal to have a winner from each area in each category. To reach this goal, the Association needs every VATAT member to make nominations in their respective areas. Let the Association help you "toot your horns." The VATAT Awards applications and procedures are available at www.vatat.org under Association> VATAT Awards. Submit your application today!

Conference Timeline: March 15th

- Reserve Conference Housing
 - Register for Pre-Conference Workshops
- Pay 2011-12 VATAT Membership Dues

Visit www.vatat.org for all your conference news!

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WHAT IS NATIONAL TEACH AG DAY?

National Teach Ag Day is a campaign to encourage agricultural education advocates, especially current agricultural educators (middle school, high school, post-secondary, pre-service programs, etc.) to share with others the great career opportunities in agricultural education and encourage them to consider careers as agricultural educators. It is also a day to recognize the contributions of current agricultural educators.

WHO IS IT FOR?

National Teach Ag Day is for anyone who wants to share the story of agricultural education and encourage students to consider careers as agricultural educators. Anyone who wants to participate can find a variety of resources to help them talk about ag education on that day, including a video and activity ideas at www.naae.org/teachag.



WHAT HAPPENS ON NATIONAL TEACH AG DAY?

Agricultural educators and agricultural education advocates will engage in a variety of activities to promote the career of agricultural education. These activities may include capitol rallies, special lessons, community activities, and more. The Teach Ag website is a clearinghouse of resources to help teachers teachers and advocates introduce the topic on that day, including a video, suggested teaching activities, games, and giveaway items.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?



- Write the Teach Ag Day date on your calendar and plan to include a lesson on March 24th about the opportunities in agricultural education.
- Tell everyone you know that March 24th is National Teach Ag Day
- If you are a postsecondary student ag education organization, plan to participate in the "How Did You Celebrate National Teach Ag Day" contest.
- For more information, visit www.naae.org/teachag

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACH AG DAY?

National Teach Ag Day is a component of the National Teach Ag Campaign, an initiative of the National Council for Agricultural Education, led by the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE). It is sponsored by Landmark Nurseries as a special project of the National FFA Foundation and by Delmar Cengage Learning.





2011 National Teach Ag Day State Contest Details and Rules

What?

This is a contest for states to compete against each other by implementing Teach Ag Activities before, during, and after National Teach Ag Day March 24, 2011. The state that has the most impact will win. Impact will be based on the ratio of NAAE members versus number of people impacted and other criteria as set forth by the scoring rubric. Therefore smaller states will have the same opportunity as larger states.

When?

Your Teach Ag Activities must take place sometime during the month of March 2011 and be completed by March 31st. All entries must be postmarked and mailed via traditional mail no later than April 15, 2011.

How?

This is the fun part. There are no limits on the ways you can celebrate or the number of different events you can have. You may do a statewide collaboration that every program takes part in or have individual programs/people implement their own activity and submit them all as one. Maybe you want to hold a rally at the capital, or have a teaching minutes challenge. Perhaps your state decides to participate in an ag teacher swap across the state. The sky is the limit. If you need ideas check out our ideas for celebrating National Teach Ag Day at www.naae.org/teachag/teachagday-ideas. See the scoring rubric for judging criteria at www.naae.org/teachag/statecontest.

Who?

A current NAAE member must submit the state entry; however participation is not limited to NAAE members. Enlist the help of your local advisory groups, alumni organizations and state staff. This may also be a good time to reach out to new audiences like extension and university faculty. The more the merrier.

Prize:

Glory, fame and of course bragging rights! We're still figuring out a cool prize, but we know you'll get onstage recognition at the 2011 NAAE convention in St. Louis, publicity in the News and Views, MMM, and Teach Ag events. Check back soon for updates!

Submission:

Mail your completed entry form (download from <http://www.naae.org/teachag/statecontest>) along with at least 5 digital photos on a CD Rom postmarked no later than April 15th to

NAAE

Attn: Statewide Teach Ag Day Contest Entry

300 Garrigus Building

Lexington, KY 40546-0215

**photos must be submitted as individual .jpg files. Do not submit collages or photos embedded in Word documents.*



Texas FFA Update

A Letter from the Executive Director

Tom Maynard, Texas FFA Association Executive Director

Economy Creates Challenges for Texas FFA Scholarship Program

The current economic climate has created a mixed bag of challenges and changes for the Texas FFA Scholarship program. The most significant change is the reduction of scholarships from a projected 170 to 135.

Non profit foundation portfolios across the nation have been hard hit by the tough economic conditions, and it was only a matter of time before the impact of these hardships trickled down on scholarship programs.

The state committee will review 250 applications—25 from each area—at its scoring meeting in late May. The committee scored 312 applications in 2010. The minimum number of scholarships guaranteed per area was reduced by 20 percent, from ten to eight to match the 20 percent reduction in scholarships. The state scholarship committee and Texas FFA Board of Directors intend for this change to be temporary and to be restored to ten when the market recovers and the number of scholarships returns to pre-recession levels.

Not all scholarship program news was dark and cloudy. Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo bumped their scholarship amount up \$1,000 to \$16,000 and raised the ceiling for pre-existing aid and scholarships from \$40,000 to \$70,000.

Teachers should note the scholarship score sheet is slightly different in 2011. Individual leadership is assigned a maximum of four points and other FFA activities section is now five points. The committee believed that quantifying leadership was difficult and that many evaluators interpreted it to simply mean offices held. This put pressure on many members to pursue offices, not to serve, but to place in a scholarship application. It also disadvantaged members in large programs in which it is difficult to hold an office.

Proficiency Rating System to be in Place for 2011

At its summer 2010 meeting, the Texas FFA's award

and degree committee approved a rule change that required proficiency award applications to receive a gold rating on a three-tiered rating scale—gold, silver and bronze—to be considered for state winner honors. In September, the Texas FFA Board of Directors concurred with the committee and approved the rule.

The committee's rationale was borne out of a concern that some proficiency areas with relatively low participation were won by applications which were not worthy of state winner recognition in terms of the program and/or the presentation of that program in the award application. The situation is somewhat akin to a breeding show class for which there is one entry, an entry which does not merit a blue ribbon. Many livestock shows give judges the latitude to award a red ribbon to a single-entry class when the entry is deemed unworthy of class winner status. Heretofore, there was no such provision that provided the committee the discretion to not name a winner in a proficiency award category.

Often, a weak application is not the result of someone simply trying to work the system, but a younger student who submits an application early in a project's history with the thought that it would surely not win, but in the absence of any competitive resistance, the application wins and the student is eliminated from further developing his or her project into a nationally competitive application.

The new system should not change the way a student completes an application. Students and teachers should be using the scoring rubrics posted online as a guide for completing the application. However, the scoring process will now include minimum benchmarks in each scoring area for an application to be considered as a gold emblem application. It should make district, area and state scoring committees a bit more cognizant of the scores in each part of the application and technical errors which would keep an application out of the gold emblem status.

Laying Good Ground For Fertile Minds

TFB applauds the Vocational Agriculture Teachers of Texas. Together we will ensure the future of agriculture in the Lone Star State.



2011 State Fair Validation Dates

- Early Tag Orders – Tags are \$7.00 from April 4 - May 6, 2011.
- Late Tag Orders – Tags are \$10.00 from May 7 – June 10, 2011.
- Priority Tag Orders – **Faxed orders only - 512-476-2894** - Tags are \$10.00 per tag, plus \$20.00 priority postage and handling fee from June 11 -16, 2011.
- Validation Deadline – All swine must be validated on or before **June 30, 2011**. Validation Chairperson must be present when the animals are validated.
- Change of ownership is due in the FFA office on or before June 30, 2011. All manila forms, hair envelopes, ethics policies, Committee Forms and Excel spreadsheets are due in the FFA office on or before July 8, 2011 (Manilas, hair envelopes & ethic policies - ALPHA ORDER).
- **TAG ALTERATIONS – ANY CHANGE TO SIZE, SHAPE, FORM OR COLOR WILL VOID THE TAG---TAG WILL BE REPLACED AT THE STOCK SHOW & REPLACEMENT COST WILL BE CHARGED TO THE INDIVIDUAL.**
- Ear Notch Correction & Ear Tag Replacement forms must be faxed (512-476-2894) to the FFA office on or before July 22, 2011.
- **Any required validation information not in the FFA office by July 22, 2011 will not be validated. Information is due by July 8. We do not have personnel in the office to process or call for missing validation items after this date.**

All information will be on www.texasffa.org the last week in March.



SAE Marketplace is an online resource designed specifically for agricultural science teachers and FFA members to locate livestock sales and breeders, purchase equipment and supplies and find the perfect Supervised Agricultural Experience project.

The SAE Marketplace is a venture of the VATAT and is simple and easy to use. It is divided into three categories which contain agricultural products and services including: The Show Source, Ag Service and Supply Shop and the Greenhouse.

Advertising on SAE Marketplace is a great way to target Ag Ed Family members! Advertisements run for 12 months and include up to 50 word of text, company logo, Web site and e-mail links--all for only \$100 per year!

Visit SAE Marketplace at www.saemarketplace.com to find your next SAE project or to advertise one!

www.saemarketplace.com

VATAT BRICK CAMPAIGN ORDER FORM

Please Print

Donor's Name:

Donor's Email:

Address:

City/State/Zip:



per line (including spaces).
 You may also purchase your brick with a credit card through VATAT Online. For more information about the brick campaign please contact Gerald Young at 512.472.3128 or gerald@vatat.org. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!

Cost is \$100. Make tax deductible checks payable to: Texas FFA Foundation.

Mail completed form to:

Please write what you would like your brick engraving to say above. A sample brick is pictured for reference. Limit 3 lines, 14 characters

**Texas FFA Foundation
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under Leadership Institute. The deadline to apply is March 18, 2011.
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Mission

To Further the Effectiveness and Professional Stature of
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Texas Young Farmers Update

From the President's Pen

Janet Bulger, Texas Young Farmers President

I want to start by saying a great big thank you to each one of you who gave me your McAlister's gift cards while we were in Odessa. I have been to McAlister's every day this week for lunch. The soup and sandwiches have been great, especially since I am sitting in a hotel room in Galveston, and the temperature outside is 28 degrees.

The state convention in Odessa was great. We had a couple of really interesting tours, the Petroleum Museum and the Confederate Air Force Museum. We were pleased to have the Mayor of Odessa, Larry Melton welcome us.

In my quest to learn as much about Texas Agriculture as possible, so that I might further fulfill the purpose of Texas Young Farmers to provide educational programs designed to meet the needs of men and women with a vested interest in agriculture, I decided to find out what the Texas Department of Agriculture Agency is. When I think of the TDA, I think of a government agency that deals with crops and farm animals. I honestly did not know the vast areas this agency covers.

What is the Texas Department of Agriculture? The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is a state agency established by the Texas Legislature in 1907. The commissioner of agriculture, who is elected in the general election every four years, heads the agency. The current commissioner is Todd Staples. The mission statement of the TDA is, "Partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural

communities, promote healthy lifestyles, and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives." The following are just some of what the Texas Department of Agriculture does:

Consumer Protection

- Regulates all fuel pumps in Texas to ensure drivers get the quality and amount of fuel they pay for.
- Regulates all weights and measures devices, such as grocery store scales and retail price scanners, to ensure consumers are charged advertised prices.

Production Agriculture

- Protects agricultural crops, such as citrus and cotton, from harmful pests and diseases.
- Facilitates trade and market development of agricultural commodities ranging from livestock to crops to ensure Texas remains the nation's leader in the production of cattle, cotton, hay, sheep, wool, goats, mohair and horses.

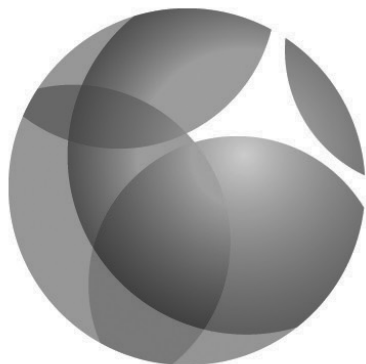
Healthy Living

- Administers the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs for Texas school children.
- Fights obesity in Texas through a statewide campaign highlighting the 3E's of Healthy Living – Education, Exercise and Eating Right.

Economic Development

- Provides tools for communities to attract businesses and other economic development opportunities.
- Offers infrastructure grants to rural communities. Leads in the development of statewide broadband services.

I had no idea they played such a vital role in so much of our existence.



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TX YF 57th Convention



Pictured above from left to right: Family of the Year recipients Ken Hedrick and Joann Hedrick from the Gonzales Young Farmers Chapter in Area VII and President Doug Gandy.



Pictured above from left to right: Outstanding Member recipient Robert Bland from the Gonzales Chapter and President Doug Gandy.



Pictured above from left to right: Sundowner Award recipient Earnest Zamora from the Willacy County Young Farmers and President Doug Gandy.

FYL... The committee is working on the National Young Farmer Institute that is scheduled to be in Texas in December, 2013. Start making your plans to attend. We will keep you posted as plans are finalized. The Young Farmers board will be meeting soon. If any of you have any ideas, suggestions or input, please send it. We want this organization to grow. We want to know what you are doing in your area to make your program work. We would love to have ideas or stories from you to put on the Web. Let us know what is going on in your program.

A Note from the YF Executive Secretary

By Don Beene

We had an outstanding 57th Annual Young Farmers Convention, and every chapter should make plans now to attend the 58th convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Austin, Texas January 13th and 14th. I know it is a long way off, but plan now and we promise you a good convention and two great meals for your registration fee. Rooms are only \$99.00 per night.

Issue VI's Ag Trivia Answers (in bold)...

1. Texas leads the nation in the Production of which below commodity?
 - a. cattle
 - b. cotton
 - c. hay
 - d. **all of the above**

2. If you spend a single dollar on food, what percentage of the dollar spent would go to the actual farmer?
 - a. **19%**
 - b. 25%
 - c. 30%
 - d. 50%

3. What is the largest student-led agriculture organization?
 - a. 4-H
 - b. Farmhouse
 - c. **FFA**
 - d. Texas Beef Council



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Texas FFA Alumni

Update

TEXAS FFA ALUMNI UPDATE

Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

FDR could have made this statement after meeting with some members of the Future Farmers of America back in the day. I thought to myself after reading this quote, "Isn't it great to be a builder?"

The curriculum we teach includes building all types of physical objects. Objects such as trailers, bbq pits, indoor/outdoor furniture, equipment, etc. However, are you building character? Do you or your Alumni group possess the characteristics your students want to mirror or grow up and be like? What are you building?

I had the opportunity to chat with our VATAT Executive Director recently. Nothing earth shattering or business related, it was mere small talk. We spoke of times passed like when I was a student 30 years ago, and he was a teacher I respected.

Some things have changed in those 30 years, including me adding pounds and loosing hair. Even the respect I have for Gerald Young has changed. My respect has grown even deeper for this gentleman. Gerald Young is truly a gentleman and a builder. Students from New Caney, Humble and Katy can attest to this.

The teachers of the State of Texas have had the opportunity to see the gentlemen and the builder. I will always remember seeing Gerald with his family at the First Baptist Church of Houston's Christmas Pageant and remember how great it was to see him as not only a family man, but a Godly man. Thank you, Mr. Young for your service to the Texas Ag Ed Family!

The 1981-82 Texas FFA President, Rafe Foreman, would often include the following poem written by Will Allen Dromgoole as he traveled the state:

The Bridge

An old man going a long, high way,
 Came, at the evening cold and gray,
 To a chasm vast and wide and steep,
 With water rolling cold and deep.
 The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
 The sullen stream had no fears for him,
 But he turned, when safe on the other side,
 And built a bridge to span the tide.
 "Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
 "You are wasting your strength with
 building here,
 Your journey will end with the ending day,
 You never again will pass this way,
 You've crossed the chasm deep and wide,
 Why build you this bridge at eventide?"
 The builder lifted his old gray head,
 "Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
 "There followeth after me today,
 A youth whose feet must pass this way.
 The chasm that was as naught to me,
 To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be,
 He, too, must cross in twilight dim,
 Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

Visit <http://texasffaalumni.ffa.org> for all the latest updates on Texas FFA Alumni news. Remember to contact your legislature about keeping weighted funding and our programs!



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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

MARCH 2011

1st - Spring Semester FFA Dues
Deadline - Austin

1st - 20th - Houston Livestock
Show & Rodeo - Houston

7th - State Tractor Technician
CDE - HLSR, Houston

11th - 26th - Star of Texas
Livestock Show & Rodeo - Austin

13th - Agricultural Public
Speaking & Preliminaries - HLSR,
Houston

14th - Agricultural Public
Speaking Finals & Results - HLSR,
Houston

18th - Mechanics Project Show-
HLSR, Houston

26th - CDE Clinics - Texas A&M,
College Station

TBD - Tarleton State Invitational
CDEs - Stephenville

31st - Texas Tech Invitational
CDEs - Lubbock

TBD - Texas FFA Board of
Directors Spring Meeting - Austin

APRIL 2011

1st - West Texas A&M
Invitational CDEs - Canyon

2nd - Clarendon College
Invitational CDEs - Clarendon

TBD - Stephen F. Austin
Invitational CDEs -
Nacogdoches

4th - Regular Swine Tag Order
Begins (State Fair) - Austin

9th - Texas Tech Invitational
Area CDEs - Lubbock

9th - Sam Houston State
Invitational CDEs - Huntsville

15th - State FFA Chorus
Applications Due

15th - Foundation Ambassador
Applications Due - Austin

15th - Convention Chronicle
Applications Due - Austin

16th - State CDEs - Texas Tech,
Lubbock

20th - State Woodlands
(Forestry) CDE - Nacogdoches

TBD - Deadline for Steer Tag
Orders - Texas A&M, College
Station

25th - 29th - TAKS Testing

TBD - State CDEs - Tarleton,
Stephenville

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Teachers Association
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