



# VATAT

## News

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

## "From the Duck Blind"

By: *Russell Thomas, Gilmer*

Family - A group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation.

This is one of the definitions of family used by Webster. I think it has hit the nail on the head, because as agricultural science teachers we are a "family."

We come together to teach our students, parents and others about agriculture and to be an advocate for agriculture. This common affiliation gives us the bonds of a family. If you have been teaching very long, you understand the relationship we have as agricultural science teachers.

It is hard to explain to others outside of the agricultural teaching world. There is a hunting show that relates all the hunters as the "brotherhood" - this connects them! This is a good example of how I feel as an agricultural science teacher. It is a special bond that I cherish as a

teacher.

This month I want to introduce you to my family. My wife, Diane, and I have been married for over 26 years. Diane also teaches at Gilmer in the elementary school as an instructional specialist. I think she has started to finally understand the life of an ag teacher! I have always had her full support throughout my years in this profession, which has been a tremendous help for me knowing that she is supportive of all my endeavors.

We have two daughters, Shelby and Haygan. Shelby is a senior at Texas A&M University, majoring in agricultural communications and journalism. Her plans are to attend seminary and have a career in writing. Haygan is a sophomore at Gilmer High School and she is very active in FFA and loves to play basketball. Both of these young



ladies are a blessing to us. It is a privilege to have such a family.

I feel the same about our VATAT, FFA and Foundation families. It is an honor to be part of these families.

Please continue to pray for our country, leaders, service men and women, our students and for our families. Be safe as you travel around our great state this month. May God continue to bless you and your family.



Diane, Haygan, Shelby and Russell Thomas pose for a picture on Shelby's ring day at Texas A&M University.

## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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SOAK UP THE GOOD LIFE, NOT THE BARN FLOOR.

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## The Pressure is Building

*Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director*

I have often said an agriculture teacher is expected to be “all things to all people.” There are teams to coach, livestock shows to enter, animal projects to supervise, classes to teach, young people to mentor, school administrators to please, high-stakes tests to administer, as well as family responsibilities. I know of few jobs that require so much; not just physically, but emotionally.

Many times the physical exhaustion can be taken care of with a few days off, but the emotional pressure doesn’t go away. Knowing you can be one decision away from a career crisis is not enjoyable to think about.

I have watched and studied teachers who seem to be most successful in being “happy.” These are men and women who are comfortable in their profession and in their personal life. We all know our public persona as “the ag teacher,” is for the most part, one of honor and respect. It does however, carry big expectations. We also need to remember our role as spouse, parent, son

or daughter. The part of our life that deals with us as a family member also carries big expectations. I doubt if my family really cares how many state officers I had or how many state champion teams I coached. I guarantee they care about how I perform as a husband, father, and now grandfather.

At times most of us have had to deal with unhappy parents or students, demanding supervisors and face situations in which we have little control. In many cases, our fate is in someone else’s hands. The best advice I have received when I found myself in these positions is to try to handle them in an honest and ethical way, and pray for a good outcome. I even had to admit I was wrong a few times. In my position, I hear about these situations weekly, and most of the time, things turn out okay.

At the end of the day, or at the end of a career, the important thing is being able to say you did your best, you ran a good race and you finished the course. Take some time for yourself and your family during this journey.

# 2012 VATAT Tenure Awards

*If you should receive a VATAT Tenure Award this year and you are not listed below, or if you feel you are listed in error, please contact Karen Grumbles at karen@vatat.org, so that we may update our records. Also, don't forget to contact the VATAT Office if you are retiring this year.*

## 5 YEARS

Novella Byrd, Cotulla ISD  
 Steven Chumbley, Texas Tech University  
 Becky Hunnicutt, Associate Member  
 Lauri Kelley, Associate Member  
 Jeannie Lafferty, Tyler Junior College  
 David Manley, DeKalb ISD  
 Ryan Saucier, Texas State University - San Marcos  
 Dala Smee, Klein ISD  
 Kori Adams, Clear Falls High School  
 Brandon Allen, Detroit High School  
 Ashley Armstrong, Tenaha High School  
 Katie Ballard, Bridgeport High School  
 Scott Bearden, Crowell High School  
 Aaron Bednarz, Lubbock Cooper High School  
 Brad Blount, Paducah High School  
 Joe Bochat, Seven Lakes High School  
 Shalley Boles, Plano Senior High School  
 Shana Brittain, Center High School  
 Joel Bush, Winters High School  
 Amber Campise, La Porte High School  
 Russell Cater, The Woodlands High School  
 Marci Chapman, Tom Bean High School  
 Bryan Chisholm, Bowie High School  
 Kevin Devrow, Mexia High School  
 Olivia Dodson, Wakeland High School  
 Gary Dominguez, Progresso High School  
 Lucas Edenfield, Dawson High School  
 Bobby Fowler, Rockwall High School  
 Tammy Gebert, Belton High School  
 Ron Gil, Canutillo High School  
 Jennifer Gilbreath, Aubrey Middle School  
 Cristen Graf, Plano West Senior High School  
 Jessica Graham, Wunsche High School  
 Donald Guillory, Hargrave High School  
 David Hall, Lamar High School  
 Rob Hawkins, Shallowater High School  
 Kori Heath, Marble Falls High School  
 Josh Hodges, DeLeon High School  
 Amanda Holman, Samuel Clemens High School  
 Joshua Hopkins, Graham High School  
 Justin Hopkins, Blanket High School  
 Tyson Huckaby, Cushing High School  
 Wesley Hutchins, Channelview High School  
 Jurahee Jones, Rocksprings High School  
 Stephanie Jones, North Shore High School  
 Jennifer Kotzur, La Vernia High School

Laura Lemons, Texas Tech University  
 Shawn Lockett, Liberty Hill High School  
 Jennifer Lockwood, Akins High School  
 Alisha Lugo, Tascosa High School  
 Lindsey Marek, Lumberton High School  
 Randy Lee Martin, Rio Grande City  
 Jamie Masvero, Klein Oak High School  
 Jason McKibben, Early High School  
 Ed Meyer, Jasper High School  
 Jeanette Middleton, Waxahachie High School  
 Jennifer Morris, Colorado High School  
 Sid Morris, Lazbuddie High School  
 Nathan Mouser, Bastrop High School  
 Rowdy Myers, Maypearl High School  
 Randy Penny, Hughes Springs High School  
 Dennis Pickering, Redwater High School  
 Lindsey Potts, Miller Grove High School  
 Cory Rains, Lamesa High School  
 Stephanie Rankin, Deer Park High School  
 Brady Rasco, Lockney High School  
 Michael Requenez, Palm View High School  
 Rebecca Robertson, Smithville High School  
 Fernando Rodriguez, Zapata High School  
 Michele Rumfield, Cy-Fair High School  
 Chris Ruscher, Nimitz 9th Grade  
 Heidi Schneider, Briscoe Jr High  
 Nelda Shipp, Mineola High School  
 Aroldo Soliz, Palm View High School  
 Jim Spake, Munday High School  
 Samantha Srp, Orange Grove High School  
 Kristan Streams, Edna High School  
 James Stricker, Klein Forest High School  
 Blake Thornton, Apple Springs High School  
 Charles Wakefield, Hardin High School  
 Andrea Watts, Judson High School  
 Weldon Whalen, Lockhart High School  
 Sean Williams, Blue Ridge High School  
 Clint Wilson, New Waverly High School  
 Tony Young, Petersburg High School  
 Michael Zarosky, Charlotte ISD

## 10 YEARS

Todd Fuller, Pettus High School  
 Jeremy Williams, Associate Member  
 Bryan Aaron, Clear Lake High School  
 Shelly Arrington, Burnet Middle School

Melissa Bendy, Chester High School  
Michael Billings, Floresville High School  
Jay Bohac, Harker Heights High School  
Steve Bradshaw, Paradise High School  
Clark Campbell, Goldthwaite High School  
Dane Castleschouldt, Willis High School  
Jennifer Clark, North Lamar High School  
Kenny Cockerell, Haskell High School  
Brad Coffelt, Whitney High School  
Missy Coffelt, Whitney High School  
Matt Comer, Beckville High School  
Justin Cox, Haskell High School  
Aaron Custer, Coahoma High School  
Karen Eaves, Silsbee High School  
Will Edwards, Frenship High School  
Larry Fortenberry, Groveton High School  
Todd Gregory, Klondike High School  
Wes Harris, Cherokee High School  
Patrick Hartley, Crandall High School  
Kurt Henry, Happy Hill Farm Academy  
Laura Horner, Mineral Wells High School  
Shannon Houy, Rouse High School  
Phil Howard, Valley View High School  
James Janacek, Palacios High School  
Tim Johnson, Princeton High School  
Brent Kiefer, Paul Pewitt High School  
Autumn Lisenbe, DeSoto High School  
JT McClellan, Odem High School  
Janell McMullan, Devine High School  
Kyle Myers, Vernon High School  
Daniel Phillips, Fairfield High School  
Kristin Powers, Garrison High School  
Jason Rich, Oakwood High School  
Justin Risner, Central High School  
Dennis Roberts, Linden-Kildare High School  
Kenny Roberts, Leonard High School  
Beldon Rudloff, Coldspring High School  
Mike Seaton, Meadow High School  
Jim Self, Follett High School  
Randy Shaw, Princeton High School  
Kelly Slone, Waxahachie Junior High School  
Josh Stegall, Chapel Hill High School  
Jason Thomas, James E. Taylor High School  
Chris Uselton, Collinsville High School  
David Vela, Edinburg Economedes High School  
Kelly Wallace, Northwest High School  
Josh Weston, Northwest High School  
Laurah Williams, Stephenville High School

## 15 YEARS

Julie Harlin, Texas A& M University  
Joe Barron, Maud High School  
Chris Beard, Albany High School

David Bray, Westbrook High School  
Candis Carraway, Livingston High School  
Kevin Dillard, Savoy High School  
Lynita Foster, Madisonville High School  
Greg Golden, Magnolia West High School  
Jeff Jones, Athens High School  
Jeff Kelley, Leander High School  
Jeff Kennedy, Poteet High School  
JoBonney LeCompte, Perryton High School  
Jerry Lewis, Red Oak High School  
Melissa Loerwald, Florence High School  
Cody McCauley, Bridgeport High School  
Steven Meier, LBJ High School  
Brad Metting, Yorktown High School  
Jeff Miller, Holliday High School  
Cathy Nations, Van High School  
Nathan Newton, Granbury High School  
Bill Radde, Axtell High School  
Raymond Ramirez, Uvalde High School  
Nikki Reed, George Ranch High School  
Clifton Russell, Archer City High School  
Billy Schares, Whitesboro High School  
Glenn SESCO, Garland High School  
Mike Shipman, Nocona High School  
James Tabor, New Home High School  
Todd Thiel, Hempstead High School  
Leslie Turner, Anahuac High School  
Jarrod Usener, Mason High School  
Travis Vaughn, Windthorst High School  
Brad Wood, Sharyland High School  
Robbie Wooldridge, Caddo Mills High School

## 20 YEARS

Jeff McGinnis, Snyder ISD  
Joe Muller, Associate Member  
Chris Bean, Lake Dallas High School  
Steven Belyeu, Linden-Kildare High School  
Ronald Blum, Sherman High School  
Darren Cosby, Anderson-Shiro High School  
Kenneth Cox, Ector High School  
Harry Dotson, Blooming Grove High School  
David Eddings, Hemphill High School  
Domingo Garcia Jr., Skidmore-Tynan High School  
Leslie Harris, Breckenridge High School  
Brad Harrison, Lipan High School  
Glen Heard, Miles High School  
Johnny Hook, Millsap High School  
Sam Howell, Sabine High School  
John Jackson, Community High School  
Jay Jimerson, George West High School  
Eric Kale, Hico High School  
Lorie Kempen, East Central High School  
Kevin Land, Lehman High School

Jason Marek, Blanco High School  
 Darin Martinez, New Deal High School  
 Chuck McHam, Brownsboro High School  
 Michael Meadows, James Bowie High School  
 Jay Newton, Vega High School  
 Darren Price, Dublin High School  
 Jeff Shows, Dime Box High School  
 Phillip Thielemann, Foster High School  
 Lance Thomas, Elkhart High School  
 Randy Tidwell, West Rusk High School  
 Joe Vann, Burnet High School  
 Danny Walton, Ryan High School

**25 YEARS**

Sarah Noteboom, Killeen ISD  
 Kenneth Barnett, Copperas Cove High School  
 Steve Black, Fairfield High School  
 Gary Bynum, Texas High School  
 Thomas Cannon, Teague High School  
 Mike Chesnut, Marble Falls High School  
 Marshall Eaton, Jim Ned High School  
 Scott Eckermann, Brenham High School  
 Glenn Grimm, Canyon High School  
 Curtis Hoover, Randall High School  
 John Lanier, Jourdanton High School  
 Mike Martinson, Sierra Blanca High School  
 Donald McGuffin, Carthage High School  
 Wendy Meadows, Iowa Park High School  
 Rusty Mertink, Giddings High School  
 Steve Monkres, Chisum High School  
 Joel Phillips, Seagoville High School  
 Robert Reynolds, Alba-Golden High School  
 Kevin Sells, La Vernia High School  
 Paul Simmons, Holliday High School  
 Keven Smith, Era High School  
 Vince Todd, Gladewater High School  
 Monte Williams, Rice Consolidated High School  
 Mary Wilson, Barbers Hill High School  
 Bill Woody, Hillsboro Jr. High School  
 Brett Wright, Falls City High School

**30 YEARS**

Craig Edwards, Oklahoma State University  
 John Mack, James Madison High School  
 Ben D. Alley, Troy High School  
 Glen Blount, Bells High School  
 Wayne Blount, Denison High School

Scott Butler, Navasota High School  
 Jim Cooper, Motley County High School  
 Ricky Gamblin, Bangs High School  
 Raymundo Garza, Alice High School  
 Dana Griffin, Corsicana High School  
 Sam Hollingsworth, Hawkins High School  
 Billy Johnson, Crandall High School  
 Joel Lanier, Seminole High School  
 Larry Lawrence, New Caney High School  
 Richard Long, Sterling City High School  
 Gilberto Lopez, United High School  
 Loyd Nations, Van High School  
 Billy Odam, Thomas Jefferson High School  
 RH Rodriguez, Dilley High School  
 Mark Scheu, Daingerfield High School  
 John Smith, Farmersville High School  
 Kim Sullins, Tolar High School  
 Tim Sullins, West High School  
 Harry Sump, John Tyler High School  
 Johnny Willeford, New Diana High School

**35 YEARS**

Richard Baldwin, Leon High School  
 Bob Burkett, Guthrie High School  
 Randy Gillum, Robert E. Lee High School  
 Butch Green, Canton High School  
 Don Henson, James Madison High School  
 George Krejci, Needville High School  
 Judd Lewis, Kemp High School  
 Joe Warner Liles, Holland High School  
 O.J. Ragland, Wills Point High School  
 Mike Sammon, Rosebud-Lott High School

**40 YEARS**

Bob Andrew, Valley View High School  
 Roger Bryant, Rains High School  
 Raymond Wrinkle, Gregory-Portland High School

**45 YEARS**

Glen Dossett, Mineola High School

Follow the VATAT on:





# TEXAS FFA NIGHT

Shirts, Pregame, Baseball, Fireworks, and Silver Boot!



Friday – May 18- 7:05 p.m.

## Special Pricing! Includes Shirt!

**Field Box- \$28**  
(regularly \$41.00)

**Bullpen - \$21**  
(regularly \$27.00)

Please note each of these packages includes a special limited edition shirt

Arrive Early and Stay Late for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual FFA Night

Join us as the Astros play their intrastate rival Rangers and receive the special FFA collectible shirt.

**Arrive Early!!** FFA will be honored during a pregame ceremony.  
**Stay Late!!** for the post game fireworks.

This will be a great day for an end of season class trip or to meet other FFA Chapters.

**Reserve your tickets early!! This game promises to be a sellout**

**For tickets either go to FFA Roster System or contact:  
Brent Broussard at 713-259-8316  
Broussard@Astros.com**

\*Offer not available at MMP Box Office and this offer cannot be combined with any other ticket offer.



# Foundation Update

## Texas Team Ag Ed ... EMPOWERING OUR Young People for a Better Texas

*Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director*

May is a great time to reflect on the positive difference agricultural education and the FFA make in Texas. With students graduating from high school and moving into their college, career or military paths, one can only wonder “how did we do so good?” Good things happen when great organizations provide outstanding programming to dedicated students. Additionally, generous sponsors provide the fuel to ensure all students have a chance to tap into the offerings of the Texas FFA. The end result of this effort is Texas becomes a better place to live, work and raise our families due to the collective effort and effect of our program.

Texas FFA delivers more than 1 million in academic and award scholarships annually.

- 140 academic scholarships ranging from \$1,000 - \$16,000
- 30 Career Development Event (CDE) awards at \$500 ea.
- 12 Leadership Development Event (LDE) awards at \$500 ea.
- 14 sponsored award scholarships ranging from \$1,000 - \$4,500
- 16 Star Awards at \$1,000 ea.
- 5 Work Base Learning Awards at \$500 ea.
- 32 Agriscience Fair Award scholarships at \$1,000 ea.
- 47 Proficiency Awards at \$1,000 ea.
- 10 Rodeo award scholarships at \$1,000 ea.

The Texas FFA Foundation serves as the administrative organization for the scholarships. This is a great testament to the quality of our Texas FFA members and sponsors who recognize the significant contribution achieved by investing in the future.

Agricultural education and the Texas FFA have evolved from an organization focusing primarily on production agriculture to a broader-based encompassing organization addressing the needs and interests of students in urban and suburban schools, in addition to the rural communities from which FFA rose in 1929. FFA gives students the opportunity to apply practical classroom knowledge to real world experiences through local, state and national competitions.

Agricultural education provides a well-rounded, practical approach to learning through three components: classroom education in agricultural topics such as plant and animal sciences, horticulture, forestry, etc.; hands-on supervised agricultural experiences such as starting a business, working for an established company or working in production agriculture; and the Texas FFA, which provides leadership opportunities and test students’ agricultural skills.

### Path to Success

There are 50 potential Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) courses which provide rigorous and challenging opportunities for more than 120,000 young Texans. AFNR courses are found in rural, suburban and urban school districts and the classrooms and laboratories reflect a diverse and balanced gender and ethnic population.

Why does the success of agricultural education and the Texas FFA matter? Just look at a few recent articles on Texas high school dropout rates. Bruce Davidson, editorial board of the San Antonio Express reported in June 2010, “We should all be worried about Texas’

staggering high school dropout rate.”

It is not just about the students in public education; it is something that will eventually have a significant impact on everyone in this state one way or another. Each class of dropouts has an annual financial impact on Medicaid, prison expenses and lost tax revenue to the tune of \$377 million, according to the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation. If the current trend continues, the state could be in for bad economic times due to an inadequate number of educated young adults entering the work force. We need our Texas FFA members to excel in their career choices and be prepared to assume leadership roles in serving our communities.

What is the state’s high school dropout rate? This question has always been difficult to answer. Those who are charged with keeping track of such statistics keep coming up with imaginative ways to manipulate the figures. Some tag the Texas high school dropout rate as high as 33 percent with speculation that the rate may be higher than 50 percent for Hispanic students and about 46 percent for African American students.

But no matter how the figures are twisted, the raw numbers show that each year more than 130,000 Texas students who entered high school as ninth graders do not graduate with their class four years later.

The good news is that our agricultural education and Texas FFA program is equipping our Texas students with sound academic programs and courses that are rigorous and relevant in today’s society, while

also equipping them for tomorrow’s jobs. We are proud of our graduating seniors and wish them well as they pursue their dreams. If you are a Texas FFA scholarship recipient, congratulations on a job well done. As you succeed in life, always remember those who helped you along the way and be sure to give back so others can have the same great experience we are proud to call the Texas FFA.

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*To learn more about the Texas FFA Foundation and Our Mission that Matters, please visit [www.texasffaoundation.org](http://www.texasffaoundation.org).*

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FFA members from across the Lone Star State are recognized at the state convention as they receive their scholarships in front of their peers.





# Texas FFA Alumni

# Update

## \$ MONEY \$

*Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President*

“Money isn’t the most important thing in life, but it’s reasonably close to oxygen on the ‘gotta have it’ scale.”  
**Zig Ziglar**

Times are tough! Money is tight! No one is going to just give you money... or will they? The Texas FFA Alumni is willing to give you money. However, there are a few strings attached. But first about the money...

### THE MONEY

Each year, the Texas FFA Alumni gives out the following monetary awards: two \$1,000 scholarships; ten \$500 local grants; and lastly we graciously give \$1,000 each to the Texas FFA, the Texas FFA Foundation and the VATAT. The money we give is raised at our Annual Alumni Auction held in conjunction with the Texas FFA Convention. Items such as scales, airline tickets, boots, retreats, FFA memorabilia, outdoor items and much more are bid on and goes home with the fortunate bidder. FFA Alumni Affiliates/Chapters also contribute to our auction by entering in the Alumni Basket Contest. Rules for this contest can be found on the alumni website.

**\$500.00 Grants:** How do you get the grant money? How must it be used? Be prepared to answer the following questions: What is your project? What do you want to accomplish? What is your plan of action (who, what, when, where, why, how)? How will this project make an impact on your members and/or program and be prepared to have a cost estimate for your project. Grant money has been used to assist the local FFA Chapter to purchase T-shirts for its members. The money has been used to start a community garden, as well as used in assisting the local FFA Chapter to purchase new livestock equipment. So, how could you use the money?

### THE CATCH

You are asking yourself about how to get free money,

and what is the catch? All a chapter has to do to be considered for the above mentioned awards is to have an active local FFA Alumni Affiliate, which is a minimum of 10 members who pay their annual state and national dues by Feb. 1 and to submit the applications to the Texas FFA Alumni Association by the June 1 deadline. Grants and scholarships have been denied, because they did not meet the requirements or missed the deadline.

Applications can be found on the Texas FFA Alumni website at <http://texasffaalumni.ffa.org>. Register to get updates about the Texas FFA Alumni.

Thanks for all you do! You can read more about the auction in next month’s newsletter. We are always seeking donations for our annual auction. More information can be found online by visiting the website.

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### **What does the Texas FFA Alumni Value?**

- We value the integral nature of FFA and agricultural education.
- We value agriculture as an essential part of society.
- We value diversity in serving all populations.
- We value the impact of a teacher on a student’s life.
- We value the impact and involvement of parents/guardians and communities on a student’s life.
- We value the community’s support of agricultural education teachers and programs.



# Texas Young Farmers Update

## From the President's Pen

*Connie Koopman, Texas Young Farmers President*

O most heavenly Father, we come to you humbly to give you praise for the many blessings you have bestowed upon each of us. We offer you thanks and praise for the wonderful blessing of rain for our pastures and grain fields. With our faith and trust in you, all things are possible.

Greetings. Have you been able to catch your breath? With all of the stock shows behind us and school winding down you would think we would be able to slow down... wrong. School might be coming to an end, but the summer activities have started. Baseball, softball, swimming, vacations, summer camps and bible schools better watch out because here we come.

As I look back on my life, I remember going every Sunday to see my grandparents who lived 45 minutes away. We always had a big lunch, followed by nap time for everyone. Then we played dominoes and ate dinner before returning home.

What is wrong with the picture now? We have no time to relax and enjoy family life like we did in the older days. It tells one how times have changed. Society is at a constant flow. There are also many more activities offered to the children today than when I was growing up. It is good to be active, but it is great to have family

time. Don't ever forget the memories you made with your loved ones. Let them live on forever.

Now for a recap of activities. In March, Don Beene, Barry Choate and I traveled to the Houston Livestock Show to present the awards for the Ag Mechanics Show. Wow! What talent these students have. I was impressed with the projects entered for competition. I also had the honor of meeting Bob Tillman, whom I have listened to as he announced rodeos for a number of years.

The State Association awarded a \$500 prize to the Grand Champion, Samuel V. Champion High School in Boerne. Just think if that school was associated with a Young Farmer Chapter they would have received \$1,000. It pays to have a chapter. If you are an ag teacher, advisor or leader, thank you for sharing your talent with these young adults to help them succeed in the working world.

Not only did these students shine with their projects, they shined with courtesy. There were a number of schools that greeted spectators as they viewed the projects. I think this is very respectful and very touching. Keep up the good work.

My board held its first meeting of the year in early March at the home of Don and Sharon Beene. We had a very good meeting with interaction on every item we discussed. As I stressed to the board, these items are not for me to decide on my own. We are a team and we will make team decisions.

Our main item was to decide if we will be moving



# MATHESON

ask. . .The Gas Professionals™

the location of our January 2013 Convention that was scheduled for San Antonio. After much discussion the board voted to move the location to Sugarland. We will be staying at the Marriott and details of tours and fun facts will follow in articles to come yet.

We also set the dates of July 20, 21 and 22 for the summer picnic and board meeting to be held in Sugarland at the Marriott. We will have activities planned for Saturday and will be sending out information about RV sites and activities. The board will be meeting on Saturday, followed by an evening gathering for everyone. We hope you will try to make it to get an early view of where the 2013 Convention will be held. The Marriott has gone out of their way to accommodate us, and their facility is beautiful. If you stay there in July for the Summer Picnic, they will be doubling our points to be used in January.

The next main item on our agenda was to take the budget line by line. We trimmed our upcoming budget by approximately \$10,000. The board is in agreement to work hard and watch our spending. We revised the awards portion of our convention and ask that members go to the website for updates.

Debi Peyton has volunteered to keep the website updated at all times. If your area or chapter has information or activities to share, please send it to her or me and we will make sure that your information gets posted.

Don, Barry and I will be attending the FFA Convention in Corpus Christi the week of July 9 – 13, 2012 and then attending the VATAT Conference in Amarillo the week of July 29 – August 3, 2012. We will also have a booth at both events. If your school does not have a Young Farmer Chapter we will have information for you on why you should, as well as prizes to register for. We truly appreciate it, and we especially love talking about our organization. We have reached over 800 members, which is very exciting. It means that we are getting the word out about Young Farmers.

Texas is also hosting the 2013 NYFEA Institute in December at the Omni Colonnade in San Antonio, Texas. Tommy Ketchum is the Chairman and is busy organizing meetings with different committees. We have had some meetings already, but hosting a National Institute takes much hard work. In conjunction with the Institute, we will be holding our 2014 Texas Young Farmer State Convention. By doing this we will be able to offer our Texas members a chance to come to the National Institute as well as the State Convention. It will be three days packed with tours, banquets, meetings and time to meet Young Farmer members from all over the United States. I attended my first Institute in December in Kansas City, Missouri, and it was money well spent. I made many new friends who expressed interest in coming to Texas.

Until we meet again, be safe in your travels, enjoy life,

make great memories, live life to its fullest, laugh until you hurt and love like this is your last day. Blessings to all.

## Did You Know?

1. *Agriculture is the nation's largest employer, with more than 21 million people working in some phase, from growing food and fiber to selling it at the supermarket.*
2. *There are 145,156 farms operated by women in the United States.*
3. *Consumers spent an average of \$2,328 per person for food in 1992. That was only 9.3 percent of disposable income - the lowest percentage in the world.*

## WHAT CAN ONE ACRE OF LAND PRODUCE?

- *Strawberries - 45,000 lbs./acre - worth \$21,759/acre*
- *Lettuce - 24,000 heads/acre - worth \$5,940/acre*
- *Potatoes - 36,000 lbs./acre - worth \$4,464/acre*
- *37.1 bushels of wheat per acre = 2,600 loaves of bread per acre*

*\* An acre of land is roughly the size of a football field.*

## Farmers are stewards of the land.

- *Each year billions of trees are seeded on farmland.*
- *Farmers use reduced tillage practices on 100 million acres, and 26 million acres are farmed in narrow strips to prevent erosion.*
- *In 1994, farmers had placed 36.4 million acres of their land in reserve to protect the environment and provide habitat for wildlife.*
- *U.S. farmers maintain 170,000 miles of windbreaks and 1.3 million acres of grass waterways.*



Vocational Agriculture  
 Teachers Association of Texas  
 614 East 12th Street  
 Austin, Texas 78701

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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

### May 2012

**4th** - State CDEs - Sam Houston State University, Huntsville

**5th** - State CDEs - Texas A&M University, College Station

### June 2012

**1st** - Public Speaking Entry Deadline

**18th** - AgriSci Fair Entry Deadline

### July 2012

**1st** - National FFA Band and Chorus applications due

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

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

## 2012 State Fair Validation Dates

The early tag orders are \$8.00 from April 2-May 4, 2012. 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.

Vocational Agriculture  
 Teachers Association  
 of Texas

#### OFFICERS

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*Vice President*

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