



# VATAT

## News

A Texas Team Ag Ed Publication | Volume V, Issue IX

## Points to Ponder

Charles Prause, Bosqueville

The month of May has arrived! Wow, I thought it would never get here. Just think school will be out in four or five weeks. April has been a busy month preparing for area and state CDEs, finalizing record books and preparing for our chapter FFA banquet. As with all of you across the state, it has been crazy at Bosqueville. We finished out the month of April attending our district convention, degree check and partaking in officer elections. Some of you will be attending your area convention and degree checks during the first two weeks of May. Good luck to you and your students applying for awards and scholarships, competing in speaking events and running for office.

I would like to take a moment to encourage my fellow ag teachers across the state to help out at your district/area conventions and degree checks. Reach out and include student teachers, as well as our first and second year teachers, through mentoring. Many of you are district and area officers, committee chairman or superintendents of award areas. I greatly appreciate the time and hard work each one of you do for the betterment of the FFA members in your chapters, district and area.

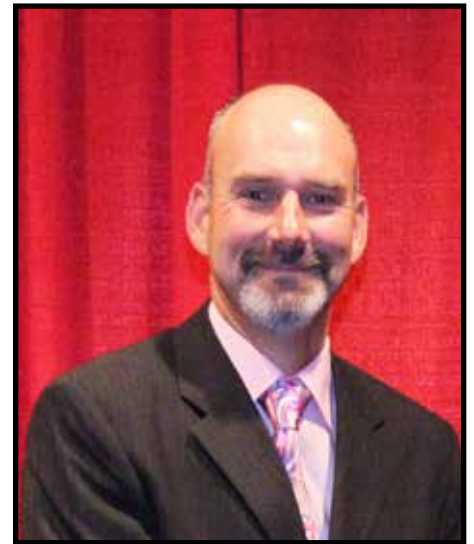
At Bosqueville, we have started working with our high school principal and counselor on organizing course offerings for next year. This is another area that you, as an ag teacher, should be involved in. HB 5 has brought about many changes I feel are beneficial to our program, as well as all CTE programs. I

encourage you to map out your course pathways and endorsements. If you have any questions or need more information contact Ron Whitson at TEA. For the betterment of your student's success be proactive, work with your administration and counselors when planning your course selections for the next school year.

I would also like to remind you that VATAT award applications are now online at VATAT.org. Many of you nominate your administrator, local booster club, radio station, etc., but you never think about yourself. We as ag teachers do not feel compelled to "toot" our own horns. Maybe it is time for you to do just that. "Toot your horn".

While we are on that subject, the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) also has opportunities for Ag Teachers to be recognized on the national level. While attending the NAAE/ACTE Conference this past year it was disappointing to see that Texas was not represented. I know for a fact that we have teachers throughout the state who deserve national recognition. Members of the NAAE are eligible for these awards. For more information regarding the NAAE awards, visit their website. The NAAE awards deadline is May 15th. Take that step, bring recognition to yourself, your chapter and your school. There is no doubt in my mind that you are deserving of the recognition.

Conference planning is going well. Be sure to check the VATAT website for regular updates. Conference housing



and registration have been open since March. Make sure to register. We are planning a great conference with an awesome keynote speaker. Professional development workshops are coming together and I think we will be able to provide a great selection for everyone. Exhibitor space will be tight as well as meeting places, but I can assure you we will manage and make it work.

Congratulations to those of you who have advanced to the state CDEs. Good luck, be safe in your travels and remember everyone is a winner.

See You Down the Road!

## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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## Important News from your Credit Union

**Dormant Accounts:**

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**Access to Credit Union Documents:**

In accordance to Section 91:315, this notice is to advise you, as a VATAT Credit Union member, you have the ability to request certain documents relating to the credit union's finances and management. These documents are: the balance sheet and income statement, a summary of the most recent annual audit, written board policy regarding access to articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules, guidelines, board policies, and copies thereof, and the Internal Revenue Service Form 990. Any requests for these documents should be made to management at our main office with advance notice.

**Complaint Notice:**

If you have a problem with the services provided by this credit union, please contact us at: VATAT Credit Union, 614 E. 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701; (512) 472-3258 or (800) 777-1825. The credit union is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas and under state law is subject to regulatory oversight by the Texas Credit Union Department. If any dispute is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may also file a complaint against the credit union by contacting the Texas Credit Union Department at 914 East Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78752-1699; (512) 837-9236 or online at [www.cud.texas.gov](http://www.cud.texas.gov).

**December 2013 Financials:**

Assets: \$6,342,028.23  
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## VATAT Conference Information

### Conference Registration

Conference registration is now open and can be accessed through the VATAT online system. Be sure to check the conference page on VATAT.org for continuations updates and a tentative schedule of conference workshops and activities. More information regarding spouse and family activities are to come later this month.

### Pre-conference Workshops

You can still register for pre-conference workshops, also through the VATAT online system, and credit card payments are accepted. Onsite registration will be available for remaining spots.

### VATAT Award Applications Are Online Now

Ashley Dunkerley, Communications Coordinator

The VATAT awards recognize members and supporters who have shown outstanding support to Texas agriculture science and FFA programs.

This year's award applications and procedures are available at VATAT.org. I encourage everyone to apply or nominate a deserving individual.

Each area is responsible for selecting its VATAT Award recipients and giving the winning nomination forms to the VATAT area executive committee member at state degree check. The executive committee member is responsible for sending the area award winning nomination forms to the VATAT Office. The forms, along with supporting materials, should be emailed to Ashley@vatat.org or faxed to (512) 472-0555.

The 2014 Award Categories:

- Outstanding School Administrator
- Outstanding Cooperation Award
- Outstanding Newspaper
- Outstanding Radio Station
- Outstanding Television Station
- Teacher's Media Award
- Texas Turn the Key
- Ideas Unlimited
- Teacher Mentor Award
- 30-Minute Club

### Give Some Thought to a Good Summer Plan

Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director

May is the month to plan and prepare for your summer activities. For teachers on extended contracts, it is important to justify those extra days on contract. I know that most of you have already worked more days than are listed on your contract. Nevertheless, it is important you account for the days you plan to work during the summer. Most districts will indicate how many days must be accounted for between the last day of in-service and the first day of in-service the next school year. Some districts even dictate you must be on campus between 8-4. I believe that is really short-sighted on their part. While some work on campus is justified, much of the needed work may be accomplished elsewhere.

A simple plan accounts for every week between the times mentioned earlier. There is usually enough time for a couple of weeks of vacation, FFA Convention and VATAT Conference. That takes care of about four weeks. The rest of the time can be used to attend in-service workshops at universities or service centers, supervise locate SAE projects, update teaching plans, order shop supplies, inventory classroom and shop equipment and work on the development of a long-range or strategic plan for your department.

Once completed, the summer plan should be shared with your campus administrator, superintendent, and the campus secretary. It is amazing how many times someone needs to know where you are, or what you may be doing. Of course, you should explain that the document is a plan, not a definite itinerary. It does help if they know when you will be out of town for convention or conference.

The development of a summer plan accomplishes two goals. The first is that you are forced to give some thought to your summer activities. The second is that it sends the message to your administration that your extra time on contract is accounted for and justifiable. I believe such a plan will pay dividends for any program.

### Are You Retiring This Year?

Karen Jones, VATAT Membership Coordinator

I am requesting that you please contact the VATAT office if you are retiring or if you know of someone who is retiring after this school year. We are continuously striving to keep our records accurate and would also like to honor members who are retiring from teaching agriculture science.

Also, this year all VATAT tenure will be posted online at VATAT.org. Please visit our website by May 31, 2014 to confirm you are on the correct list. If your name is not listed under the right category please contact me as soon as possible at (512) 472-3128 or Karen@VATAT.org. Thank you for your help with this matter.





# Texas FFA Update

## 2013-2014 Texas FFA Thrid Quarter Board Meeting

Tom Maynard, Texas FFA Executive Director

The Texas FFA Association Board of Directors met in Austin on March 24, 2014 for their third quarter board meeting and addressed the following actions and discussion items:

1) The board considered a proposal concerning a revision of the state officer selection process. The new process would be conducted entirely at the state convention and would open the door for more members to be considered for the state association's top student leadership positions. It would also make the process more geared toward actual leadership skills and competencies. It would be more student-driven and create more outlets for students to serve in vital leadership roles. A proposal summary along with the proposal in its entirety can be viewed online. You may also comment on the proposal at <http://ow.ly/voU0D>.

2) The board approved four technical amendments to the Texas FFA Association Constitution for submission to the student delegates at the 86th Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth:

a) Amendment 1 would strike the references to the State Officers' Qualifications and Prerequisites Form in Article X, Section E (All language past the first sentence.) This language is deemed to be overly prescriptive for a constitution. While some dates and deadlines are appropriate in a constitution, language governing submission timelines for applications should be in policy and procedure documents rather than in the constitution. Furthermore, whether or not a member is eligible to run for state office is a question that is addressed long before this point in the year.

b) Amendment 2 would add to Article X, Section G which provides a reference to student officer suspension and discharge. Operationally, this does not change anything, since Texas FFA has had a policy in place to address these issues, but it is considered prudent to have a reference to it in the constitution. Texas FFA believes that all local chapters should have a reference to such policies in their constitution. The state constitution should model what is expected of chapters, districts and areas.

c) Amendment 3 would change the title of Article X to reflect the more comprehensive nature of this section as it relates to officers. Currently it reads "State

Officers and Procedures for Election." The amendment would render it "Election, Succession Replacement and Discharge of State Officers."

d) Amendment 4 strikes the language related to areas and districts in Article XII, Section D. The remaining language that states that chapter officers must have attained the chapter degree is consistent with the national constitution. Texas FFA will delegate responsibility for district and area officer requisites to respective districts and areas. Furthermore, the current language is inaccurate because it implies that districts and areas are chartered. There is no charter for districts and areas since they are considered administrative subdivisions of the state association.

3) Article XVII of the Texas FFA Constitution requires that all amendments be submitted to the membership at least 30 days before the convention. However, area associations may submit proposed constitutions until 60 days before the convention. The official opening of the convention is July 15. Therefore, notification of proposed amendments must bear a postmark of June 15th or earlier. Amendments proposed by area associations must bear a postmark of May 16th or earlier. We intend to post all amendments in the next few weeks and send all amendments the week of May 19th, so you will have them before school releases for summer.

4) The board adopted new policy language related to the release of information from the scholarship selection process. The new language was created and adopted in response to information being leaked from the process before selection results have been verified and finalized. Leaking of unofficial results can potentially create very negative circumstances for students and their teachers and families. The following language was added to TXFFA-PH22.3:

a) Teachers and students should expect the Texas FFA Scholarship process to be conducted with the same quality of standards that are consistent with the core values of the Texas FFA Association. As a result, committee members and volunteers may be excused from serving on any state level committee indefinitely due to ethical and confidentiality violations, such as but not limited to releasing selection results via social media, phone or email

before the official results have been posted by the Texas FFA Association.

b) Unofficial results from the State Selection in Austin and interview process at Degree Check will have a review period of up to 24 hours after the committee concludes. This review period will ensure that there are no technical/human errors and results will be posted as soon as the FFA Executive Director approves the review. Once the results are posted on the Texas FFA website, they will be deemed 'Official Results.'

c) It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to provide a valid e-mail address. Official results shall be posted online and announced via email to applicants and the teacher designated as the applicant advisor.

5) The board reviewed the convention RFP for the 2019 convention. The board will consider bids for this convention in its June meeting. Current convention cities are as follows: 2014 in Fort Worth, 2015 in Corpus Christi, 2016 in Dallas, 2017 in Corpus Christi and 2018 in Fort Worth.

6) The board reviewed progress on conversion of swine validation and officer candidate applications to web-based processes.

7) The board received updates on state officer activities, investments, convention speakers and entertainers, new SAE documentation implementation and potential nominations for open board positions, membership operations and the 2014 State Convention. The board also received progress reports from the TEA, VATAT and Texas FFA Foundation.

## 9,000 Members Attend Tarleton Invitational

Ashley Dunkerley, Communications Coordinator

Approximately 9,000 Texas FFA members from across the state traveled to Stephenville, Texas on March 27, 2014 for the Tarleton State University Invitational Career Development Event.

This year marked the 42nd year Tarleton's College of Agricultural and Environmental Science hosted the statewide judging contest. The annual event took place on the Tarleton campus, along with the university's Agricultural Center, Horticulture Center, Hunewell Ranch, the Southwest Regional Dairy Center, Lone Star Arena and Stephenville City Park. Hundreds of Tarleton students served as group leaders and contest mentors to the 400-plus high schools in attendance.

CDEs build on what is learned in agricultural classes and encourage members to put their knowledge into practice. The invitational serves as a practice for FFA student's preparing for future contests. The event offers FFA members 17 contests in which they can compete including: livestock, poultry, meats, wool, entomology, land, range, wildlife and recreation management, homesite evaluation, nursery/landscape, dairy cattle, horse, milk quality and products, farm business management, vet science, floriculture, and environmental and natural resources.

Several \$1,000 scholarships were presented, along with a \$2,000 sweepstakes agricultural scholarship.

# TEXAS FFA ETHICAL LEADERSHIP FELLOWS

 <p><b>Chanda Neal</b></p> <p>Chanda Neal is a past Texas FFA Foundation Ambassador from Saltillo, TX. Chanda is excited to share what she has learned through her Ambassador and FFA experience to help other members! Chanda says "I want to help plant seeds of service, ethics and value-based leadership in our members so that we can continue to produce blossoming leaders who are willing to give back and grow the leadership of our organization." Chanda is heading into her sophomore year at Tarleton State University where she is majoring in Agricultural Education with a minor in Agriculture Communications.</p>	 <p><b>Jordan Bien</b></p> <p>Jordan Bien is a past Texas FFA State Officer from Brownsboro, TX. Jordan served the Area VIII Association as a State Vice President during the 2012-2013 school year. Jordan and his teammates lead the association to a record membership milestone of reaching 100,000 members. Jordan understands the importance of ethical leadership, and says "We have to feel comfortable talking about ethics and leadership, so that others can follow in our footsteps." Jordan is heading into his junior year at Tarleton State University where he is majoring in Agricultural Education.</p>	 <p><b>Tori Jones</b></p> <p>Tori Jones is a past Texas FFA Foundation Ambassador from Petersburg, TX. Tori served as an Ambassador for three summers, and understand the value that Texas FFA supporters place on ethics, values and leadership. Tori says "Leading is one thing, but being ethical about is and sticking to your values through your leadership determines the type of leader that you are." Tori is heading into her sophomore year at Tarleton State University where she is majoring in Agribusiness with an emphasis in Agricultural Economics.</p>
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# Texas FFA Foundation Update

## The Texas FFA Scholarships 101

Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director & Joanne Shelton, Scholarship Administrator

Scholarships are just one of the many rewards the Texas FFA provide for students who excel. Noticed by sponsors, policy makers, school administrators, parents and stakeholders, the Texas FFA is proud of the approximately \$2 million in award and academic scholarships offered annually. While the Texas FFA, in collaboration with great sponsors, selects the award winners, the Texas FFA Foundation plays a critical role in scholarship administration of Texas FFA scholarships. With graduation just around the corner, we thought now was the time to take a moment and review Texas FFA scholarship procedures.

Thanks to the generosity of numerous scholarship donors, the Texas FFA will award more than 135 scholarships to outstanding graduating seniors through its academic scholarship program. These scholarships are awarded based on academic and FFA achievements as well as the member's performance in an interview process.

Applications are accepted once per year from seniors in high school who meet the minimum requirements. They are scored by an independent committee to ensure the integrity of the scholarship selection process. As one navigates the scholarship opportunities, they must also put a priority, and focus, on maintaining the requirements of the scholarship. Like the Texas FFA, scholarship donors want to give scholarships. However, critical requirements are in place to ensure the student performs up the expectation of the donor and organization. As an example, recipients must maintain an approved degree plan leading to a 4-year degree at Texas college or university and successfully complete a minimum of twelve hours with a minimum current and cumulative 2.5 GPA.

Saying thank you is also a key component to the scholarship experience. If someone walked up to you and said, "Hey, I believe in your dreams" and wrote you a check for \$20,000, \$18,000, \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$2,500 dollars would you say "thank you?" Maybe even write them a thank you note? Chances are you would. Why? Because we express our appreciation and gratitude to those who help make our dreams come true. One way to accomplish this is through corresponding each semester with scholarship sponsor to provide brief update on past semester progress.

Once you've received a Texas FFA scholarship, we hope you will pay close attention to the requirements of your donor.

If you have questions, feel free to contact Scholarship Administrator for the Texas FFA Foundation, Joanne Shelton, at [joanne@texasffaoundation.org](mailto:joanne@texasffaoundation.org) or (512) 480-8047. Congratulations to all of those who receive scholarships and thank you to the generous sponsors who are providing the fuel to help make dreams come true. Texas is truly a better place to live, work and raise our families because of the investment we've made in the future.

### We Would Like To Thank Our Donors

- Agricultural Education Fund
- C.J. "Red" Davidson Memorial
- Farm Credit Bank of Texas
- Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo
- Fort Worth Stock Show Syndicate, Jim Bob Norman Scholarship
- Richard Wallrath Educational Foundation
- San Antonio Livestock Exposition
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- Texas Young Farmers
- Texas FFA Foundation

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# Texas FFA Alumni Update

**“If I knew I was going to live this long, I’d have taken better care of myself.” - Mickey Mantle**

Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President

Despite what most ag teachers believe, the following statements are not true:

- 1) Roloids© nor Tums© are after dinner mints.
- 2) Pepto-Bismol© and Mylanta© are considered “bar shots” or “night caps”.
- 3) It is okay to self-medicate with drugs/vitamins indicated for animals.
- 4) You have special powers that make you invincible.

Although ag teachers are a special breed, we are still human. I have seen several incidents of individuals in our profession ignore warning signs because they have too many things to do and did not have time to go to the doctor. The health of their show animals were a greater priority than their own well-being. Sometimes it may be their physical health and perhaps their mental, emotional, or spiritual health.

Case in Point - One individual ag teacher had a stinging/nagging pain in his upper neck and upper chest region. He ignored the pain and blamed it on a pinched nerve that occurred when he had a car accident weeks earlier. He would not have that pinched nerve checked in the summer because he had the District Degree Check, Area Convention and his local banquet. Not to mention he wanted to please his administrators by going to the Adopt-A-School Banquet, the Prom, etc...

Needless to say, the pain continued until he gave in and went to the emergency room to get some meds for this nagging pain. The doctor diagnosed this “nagging pain” as myocardial infarction. In layman’s terms, he was having a heart attack and found out that he was a diabetic as well. They found that he had four blocked arteries. One was blocked 100%, one 95%, one 90%, and another 60%. A triple bypass and good meds got him going again. Note- In instances such as this, do not drive yourself to the emergency room. This teacher did.

Yet again, another ag teacher was blaming his heartburn & upset stomach on bad or spicy food... You guessed it, a few years later and his gallbladder removed cured the problem. We all know personal instances where we have witnessed such occurrence. So make it a part

of your summer plans to check on your medical health, mental health and spiritual health. If your doctor’s last name is Google, it’s time to get a second opinion.

P.S. - Sometimes that “nagging pain” may be your spouse. Don’t ignore them either.

## Who is the Texas FFA Alumni?

The mission of the Texas FFA Alumni Association is to secure the promise of FFA and agricultural education by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

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

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# Texas Young Farmer Update

## Notes From the Executive Secretary

Don Beene, Texas Young Farmers Executive Secretary

As I previously mentioned, this month I would like to address the subject of leadership.

I am a member of the Limestone County Retired Teachers and two different square dancing groups, all of which are struggling to fill an officer position. I hear the same thing when I visit with ag teachers regarding organizing a Young Farmers chapter. The lack of passionate volunteers seems to be keeping these organizations from thriving.

John Maxwell, a pastor and author of over 60 leadership books, said "A great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position."

I believe Maxwell is saying that you must believe in what you are a part of. This pertains to organizing a new Young Farmers program, there must be passion behind starting a new chapter. Do you believe there is a need for adult agriculture education? Do you want to build a community service organization? Do you want to encourage and assist your local FFA Chapter? With passion, come willing members, volunteers and leaders.

Wendell Willkie believed that you, as teachers, have the ability to seek out great leaders when he was quoted saying "Education is the mother of leadership."

I encourage you to look around and find the person in your community that has the passion to assist you in establishing a Young Farmers chapter.

Let them embrace a leadership role. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "The best executive is the one who has the sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

I recently came across a couple more quotes that I believe pertain to this matter. One is another from John Maxwell, "People buy into the leader before they buy into the vision." As you move forward with organizing a program keep that in mind. Also remember, "Where there is no vision, the people perish", Proverbs 29:18.

On another note, I enjoyed reading the article that the VATAT President, Charles Prause, wrote in last month's newsletter. He stated, when asked why they did not vote this year, "Most people tell me they did not have time to vote due to other commitments."

I believe that people have time to do what they think is important. A busy person will always have the time to do what they really want to do. I hope that you take the time to vote in the run-off elections. I agree with what District 12 State Representative, Kyle Kascal, said when he requested "Please look at the person and not the R or D."

I also agree with Charles when he said, "We must focus on the issues at hand and not party affiliation."





## The Moral of the Story

Kenneth Brown, Texas Young Farmer President Elect

One day a wise old man sat me down and told me a story. The moral of that story was if you're not growing, you're dying. Honestly, I didn't agree with his statement. I am your typical man; you could say I am stuck in my ways and resistant to change. When I find something I like, I stick to it. For example, I prefer a certain toothpaste brand; I don't care if they develop a "new and improved" version, as long as they leave mine alone. When I visit my favorite restaurant I want the #19 with chopped onions on the side. I've been ordering it that way for the last 15 years and I intend to keep ordering it that way.

Don Beene, Texas Young Farmer Executive Secretary, just happened to be that wise old man. I believe he knew that I wouldn't agree with his moral of the story. However, he proceeded to tell me the story in order to teach me in order to bestow his wisdom. What does a stalk of corn do when it stops growing? Well, it falls over and dies. What about cotton, or tomatoes or anything else? It dies too. Cattle and goats don't die you say? You're right, at least initially. What does happen to them is they get old, tough and to the point where no one wants to use them anymore so they might as well be dead.

Mr. Beene's story made me think long and hard, and as a result I have changed my way of thinking. I actually believe I already felt this way, but just didn't realize it. As agriculturists we have to make changes and grow. To my audience, I offer the following. Support our youth; they are our future. Become informed of the needs of your local advisers. Demonstrate to your children and others the need to be civic minded. Take an active role in 4H, FFA, Young Farmers and your local school board. Become not just members, but leaders who want to better America through these great programs.

In closing I'd like to say thanks to each and every one of you. The future of agriculture and our youth are brighter because of your support. I pray that the Lord touches you and guides you in the direction he needs you to go.



Houston Ag Mechanics Show Grand Champion

Front Left to Right: Zachary Pratka, William Abate and Dorman Vick  
 Back Left to Right: Dick Alario, Glenn Lillie, Logan Bourgeois, Been Herr, Mark Zoeller, Gus Smith and Kenneth Brown

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# TEXAS TEAM AG ED EVENTS

## May 2014

**2nd** State CDEs, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville

**3rd** State CDEs, Texas A&M University, College Station

**12th** Texas FFA Scholarship Deadline

**12th** State CDEs, Welder Wildlife Refuge

## June 2014

**1st** State Public Speaking Entry Deadline

**7th - 11th** State Leadership Conference

**11th - 13th** State Degree Check

**30th** Swine Validation Deadline

## July 2014

**4th** Deadline for all swine validation materials

**14th - 18th** State FFA Convention

**28th - 1st** VATAT Professional Development Conference

Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas

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