

TEXAS

FARM FRESH E-HARVEST

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

May 2019

Farm Fresh Spotlight Story

Prepare School Garden for Summer Success!

It's hard to believe that the school year will be winding down in just a few weeks. If your school campus is lucky enough to have a garden, the summer months can be a great time to think creatively about how to care for it during the hot, but potentially productive, season.

Set up a Volunteer Calendar

Parents and students most likely love the garden as much as you do, so get them involved in caring for it during the summer months. [TDA's Let's Get Growing: Connect](#) provides resources for a school garden coordinator to easily recruit and schedule volunteers.

Coordinate with Summer Camps or Summer Meal Programs

When school is out for summer, TDA's Summer Meal Program partners at schools and nonprofits provide meals and snacks at no cost to children 18 years old and younger. Invite these partners to make working in your garden an enrichment activity for the participating children.

Visit [SummerFood.org](#) to find a meal site and partner near you!



Contact TDA

Emilee Case
Coordinator for Farm
Fresh Projects

[Email](#) us or call
(877) TEX-MEAL

Connect with Others

Texas Statewide Network

This [LinkedIn Group](#) is an online network connecting schools, child and adult care centers, producers, support organizations and community members with important information about expanding local food efforts in Texas.

[Join Today!](#)

Texas Farm Fresh

Network

[Use this tool](#) to connect with Texas food companies that currently sell or are interested in selling to schools, child care centers and summer meal programs. Company listings include contact information, product availability and distribution radius.

Funding Opportunities

Farm to School Spotlight



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING
TO LOVE LOCAL

Sweeney ISD Takes the Farm Fresh Challenge to Encourage Students to Make Healthy Choices

Sweeney ISD first participated in the Farm Fresh Challenge in 2017 and found many reasons to pledge

participation again in 2018.

Before taking the challenge, a menu audit revealed that they were already serving multiple items grown and made in Texas! They also found the district's co-op offered Texas-sourced items such as milk, bread items, tortilla chips, pizza, sausage and a few fruits and vegetables.

During the challenge, they used the USDA DoD Fresh program to identify even more fresh items available from Texas farmers.

Sweeney ISD Child Nutrition Director Kathy Wolford said they started making plans for the challenge at the start of the school year. To celebrate the challenge in October and complete the **Teach Local** component of the challenge, Ms. Wolford sent teachers a list of Texas items they could incorporate into lesson plans. She said this increased the amount of excitement among students as they went through the lunch line.

To engage students while they were in the cafeteria, Sweeney ISD staff used TDA's Harvest of the Month Posters as well as stickers, buttons, and static clings provided to all participating districts.

[Click here](#) to download the full suite of Harvest of the Month materials for early learners and middle-high school students.

Pledge participation today to take the Farm Fresh Challenge and earn recognition for your efforts just like Sweeney ISD!

PLEDGE NOW

Tools provided to help each school celebrate

Participating schools will receive a toolkit of Farm Fresh materials, including a choice of buttons, stickers, or static clings for the celebration in October.

View all of the print ready files for bookmarks, posters, banners, stickers, and much more at Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshChallenge

Register by **July 15th** to guarantee on-time delivery of Farm Fresh support materials

Farm to Child Care Spotlight

Eat Local. Teach Local. Be Social.

Child and adult care nutrition programs across Texas pledged to **Eat Local. Teach Local.** and **Be Social.** during March. Congratulations to all participants in the first ever statewide challenge! Your efforts will have a lasting impact, as young Texans learned how to choose foods grown close to home.

Submit your [participation form](#) by **May 3** to receive statewide recognition! This form is short and easy to complete.

SUBMIT FORM

Farm to Summer Spotlight

Eat Local. Teach Local. Be Social.

TDA is bringing the 2nd annual [Summer Farm Fresh Challenge](#) to participants of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) statewide! The challenge will occur **June 10-21, 2019**. Pledge your participation in the Summer Farm Fresh Challenge by **May 24th** to receive supportive materials such as buttons and stickers. The Summer Farm Fresh Challenge encourages summer meal programs to serve more local foods, teach children about the importance of Texas agriculture, and share this message with families and community members. SFSP and SSO contracting entities (CEs) interested in participating in this exciting challenge can register at Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshChallengeSFSP.

Financial support from organizations may help establish or advance local Farm Fresh initiatives.

[Go here](#) for a list of opportunities from TDA, USDA and other organizations.

Stay Connected



Interested in learning more about Texas products?

Sign up for the [Go Local. GO TEXAN E-zine](#) today.



Welcome to the Farm Fresh Network!

Two Texas agriculture businesses recently joined the TDA Farm Fresh Network - Acornios and Trinity Ranch.

Acornios Farm owner, Felicia Harris grows apples, peaches, pears, dragonfruit, avocados, apricots, garlic and onions. The farm has been in production in Terrell since 2017.

Trinity Ranch is owned and operated by the Stanley family in Seguin. They specialize in hydroponically grown lettuce, greens, herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers. They are currently vendors at the Big Red Barn Farmers Market in Seguin, and are also interested in providing their products to Texas schools and child care centers.

Visit [Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork](https://squaremeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork) for more information about TDA's Farm Fresh Network.



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