



VATAT

News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2012 Volume IV, Issue I

"Reflections" In The Rear View Mirror

By: Kevin Swor, President

"My, what a year!" Did you say that on the last day of school? If so, that means you helped others, as well as made memories. A wise man once told me a person should have a talk with himself every now and then to reflect on the positives and negatives. That wise man was my dad, and I catch myself having that talk just like he told me. So, let's talk a while.

We all know the purpose of a rear view mirror, correct? Well, it could be to watch the approaching police car, but let's think positively first. Imagine you are looking through the big rear view mirror in the school bus at all the FFA members behind you. Now concentrate on the past year. After all, is that not why we study history to learn from the past? Your view may not be perfect or even pretty at times, but that is okay.

The first things many of us see are state or area banners, grand champion pictures, media coverage of local activities, chapter awards and scholarships. But what made those the most cherished activities? It is because of the priorities each agricultural science instructor has established for themselves. It is a learned priority instilled within each of us early in our professional career, or maybe before. We saw other teachers qualify or win a state event and decided it would be great to accomplish that goal also.

My advice to those new teachers striving for that first accomplishment is to look in your mirror and see what

has motivated you in the past. Reflect on your personal accomplishments and fuel your passion for the future year. Seasoned teachers - talk to yourself and see if you gave it your all last year. Refocus and start a fresh year. Sometimes just enjoying the moments of the past rekindles my desire to continually improve as an educator and person.

As I look in my mirror, I see Buddy Wallace speaking to me two years ago about one of his accomplishments, which was to help bring the Texas Ag Ed family closer together. This family has grown this year through the help of everyone working toward common goals. This is a pleasant view in my mirror, and I will strive this year to bring us even closer together.

I caught a glimpse in the mirror of the first female VATAT President and the first female chairman of the FFA Board of Directors. Sandra Choate has served the organization with the utmost integrity and dignity. Sandra, thanks for your willingness to serve our organization and to pave the way for others through your example.

The mirror shows the other VATAT officers who have served your organization very well this past year.

David Reiley served as chair of the Animal Industries Committee and will be chairman of the FFA board next year. The light is at the end of the tunnel, David.

I can't say enough about Russell



Thomas who served as the VATAT President. Russell is a true professional and a great friend who has guided me this past year.

I saw Charles Prause crunching numbers as he compiled the budget this last year. Charles, we survived but through your leadership we will be better next year.

I look forward to the year ahead. I would like to welcome Jack Winterrowd to our VATAT family. Jack is the newly

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VATAT TRIVIA

Post the answer on our Facebook wall!

What was the official title of the keynote speaker during the Opening General Session on Tuesday?

New Secretary/Treasurer Elected

Jack Winterrowd, agricultural science teacher at Cedar Park High School, was elected to serve as the VATAT Secretary/Treasurer for 2012-13. Winterrowd received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University and received his master's degree in educational management. He hopes to use his position to continue helping agricultural science teachers across the state be successful.

On his feelings as a new officer, Winterrowd says, "I pledge my very best efforts to assist the members and promote agricultural education, so its strong presence will continue for many years to come."



2012-13 VATAT Officers L-R: Charles Prause, Vice President; Kevin Swor, President; Jack Winterrowd, Secretary/Treasurer

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"Reflections"

Continued from page 1

elected VATAT Secretary for 2012-13. Jack has 33 years of teaching experience and is currently the agricultural science teacher at Cedar Park High School. I would also like to welcome his wife Tammy and thank her ahead of time for taking care of everything while Jack is away from home.

I saw Gerald Young in my mirror driving around in his new Ford truck. I believe he had a smile on his face. I don't know if it was because he did not have to prepare the professional conference, or because Barney had done a remarkable job his first year. Keep up the good work, Barney. I know you will guide us through this legislative year. We all know the truth behind these guys' success. Thanks, ladies. You are the best.

I was looking in my mirror at the fashionable blue and gold jackets, because the Texas FFA had its best year yet. Texas FFA is not only growing in numbers, but also quality. The leadership from top-to-bottom should reflect on these accomplishments and determine how to get more active participation with the increased membership.

I saw a workhorse in my mirror - the Texas FFA Foundation. Their achievements do not go unnoticed. Looking back I can see where we were and how much this group has accomplished. A brochure was provided with information about the FFA Foundation at the conference. Please take time to read and reflect on this information. There is much work to be done by each of us to help the needs of the entire family.

Now look in your mirror and savor your successes, because this will help fuel your passion for the year ahead. Reflect on what you learned at the professional conference and the contacts you made. These will be the tools to see you through the year ahead. Now consider the people on the bus. They are the 1,500 Texas agriculture science teachers, and we are there for each other. After all, isn't that what families are for?

Now have that talk with yourself and be prepared for the best year yet. Don't forget to get rosters ready, fundraisers started and teams trained. Contests will be here before we know it. Call me if I can help, and we'll see you down the road.

Attention Looks!

We are in need of your favorite recipes for the 2013 ag teachers and spouses cookbook.

Please include any history your recipe has.

You can e-mail, fax or mail the recipes to:

Andrea Swor
611 N. Temple
Diboll, TX 75941

E-mail: cheyenne@poulands.com
Fax: 936-829-4997

Proceeds will go to the VATAT Scholarship Fund.

Recipes need to be submitted by Dec. 31, 2012.

My Second First Year

Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director

On July 1, 2012, I began my second year serving the agriculture teachers of Texas as Executive Director of VATAT. Some of my duties will remain much the same. According to our Constitution, I am the Chief Operating Officer of VATAT. Operating the "business" of our association has been a learning experience and I hope to be better at this task after a year of experience. Planning and managing conference (with much help), will vary because the location will change to Corpus Christi next year. I am extremely proud of the conference in Amarillo, but there are things to improve. Please e-mail or call me with your suggestions or comments about the conference.

So why did I title this article "My Second First Year"? In January 2012, legislators will descend upon Austin and that is the difference between this year and the last. Another of my duties is to serve as Chief Lobbyist for VATAT. Basically this means I am your main advocate in Austin. Some lobbyists can spread large campaign donations around or "wine and dine" key legislators. I won't be doing that. My role will be in communicating with representatives and senators before and during the session in telling the agricultural education story. Our program is the envy of other education groups and serves as a model for many. We have to make sure they hear our story.

It is my job to identify key issues and pass the word on to you. According to many experts, don't expect to regain school funding lost in the last session. While the economy is slowly crawling out of the depths of a major recession, there are still miles to go. We do hope to escape further cuts. Legislation often comes down to fighting over limited funding. The two causes we know will come up are our "weighted" funding for CTE and Teacher Retirement System changes.

I badly need your help to keep our funding and maintain a quality retirement program for the future. There are 150 representatives and 31 senators who will be making decisions that affect our program. There are 15 State Board of Education members who interpret legislation and charge TEA with carrying it out. I am asking every VATAT member to connect with their elected officials this fall. It is critical they hear from you or they will think you don't care. I assure you that a call or e-mail from you means something. They have staff to log all calls or e-mails on each issue. If you are unsure who represents you, go to our website under Teacher Toolbox > Legislative Updates > Who Represents me. Ask to be added to their e-mail list for regular updates from them. I won't be asking you to forward form letters. Any communication needs to be in your own words.

With 48 new representatives out of 150, a new Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, a new Chairman of the Senate Education Committee and a new Commissioner of Education, it really will be a new day in agricultural education. My second first year will be quite an experience, of that I am sure.

From the Duck Blind

Russell Thomas, Outgoing VATAT President

As I had Amarillo in my review mirror, I thought about the week I just experienced during the conference. It was a time to see fellow agricultural teachers recognized for their accomplishments, attend workshops to become better teachers and advocates, listen to great speakers and a chance to fellowship with other teachers. The conference is always one of the highlights of my year - especially this year. I would like to thank all of our sponsors for providing support to our conference. The end of this week reminds me of the end of a season, and the new school year as a beginning of another.

So of course, you know I would have to say something about duck hunting, and it is just around the corner. When I get the chance to go hunting with my friends, we all know what jobs we have to get ready for the morning hunt. Everyone's goal is to get the waterfowl as close as we can to the blind. Everyone has a part that is important to the success of the hunt.

One part is the decoy technician who makes sure decoys are placed correctly in the spread. Another part is selection of the blind for the morning hunt by determining the wind direction to know how the ducks will enter the spread. The next responsibility for our hunt is for someone to use the duck call. Then, there is the dog handler so the waterfowl can be retrieved back to the blind. Each of these responsibilities play a vital role in the success of the hunt.

Serving as your president this year was a tremendous honor and privilege. But, just like the morning hunt to be a success with the different roles of the hunters, my year of service wouldn't be a success without my fellow officers. Sandra, David, Kevin and Charles all played a vital role in the success of our association and the advancement of our profession. They have sacrificially volunteered to lead our association. I would like to thank each of them and the VATAT Board of Directors for their time and service to our association. They have all been a tremendous help to me, and I count it a blessing to be associated with great leaders.

Also, I would like to thank Barney, Karen, Julie and Callie for all the hard work and dedication to the association and the teachers. They made the conference a big success this year and will continue to give their all for each of us.

Our Ag Ed Team and sponsors are another vital part of our success. Each of them, such as the FFA Foundation and the Texas FFA, are critical factors.

Just as each of the hunters has a part in the success of the hunt, so each of us plays a role in the success of our association. Let the season begin.

The minutes from the 2012 VATAT Board of Directors meetings can be found by visiting the website and selecting Board of Directors > Meetings > Minutes.

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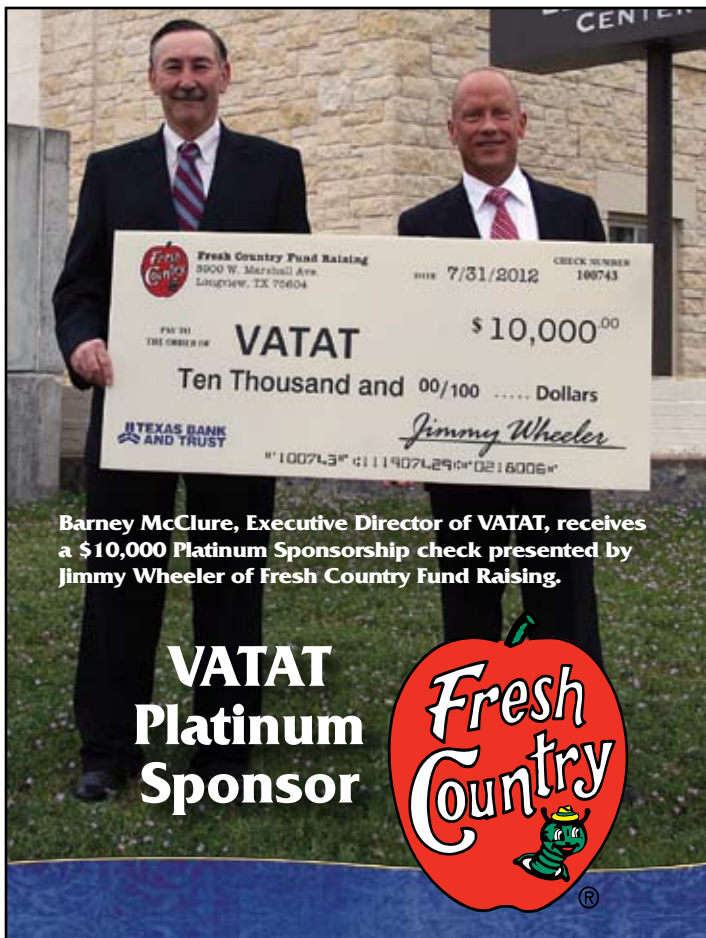
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Barney McClure, Executive Director of VATAT, receives a \$10,000 Platinum Sponsorship check presented by Jimmy Wheeler of Fresh Country Fund Raising.

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Newly Elected VATAT Board Members

- Warren Beard, Area VII - Hondo
- Will Cauthen, Area IX - Martinsville
- Kelley Clements, Area VI - Grand Saline
- Tamara Christian, Area VIII - Penelope
- Cody Darby, Area VI - Harmony
- Bobby Farias, Area X - Bishop
- Jesse Guerra, Area X - Lyford
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Texas FFA Update

What is New with Texas FFA?

Scholarship Application to be Converted to Online Format

The Texas FFA Association will be converting the Texas FFA Scholarship application to an online process.

Many veteran teachers remember days of tedious, intense labor over a star student's scholarship application making sure information was centered and just above the line of a hard copy application. Each application was a painstakingly executed work of art requiring endless applications of Liquid Paper correcting fluid and a steady hand on the typewriter.

The conversion to an Excel document was an improvement, reducing duplicate entries of identical information and expediting the completion process, but didn't solve every issue. Teachers and students still wrestled with the quirks and idiosyncrasies of a large spreadsheet document that sometimes had a mind of its own.

Beginning in spring 2013, the application process will be online, eliminating the instability of the Excel document and the inconsistent performance when downloaded through school servers and opened on different platforms.

"The online process will reduce the amount of manual data entry and enable us to use management programs that are more stable than Excel," Maynard says. "It will also allow us to collect selection process data that heretofore had to be collected in a separate process."

The new program will still produce a hard copy application for committees to evaluate, but will also allow for the electronic archiving of applications by donors, who currently receive a box of paper applications.

The new application will be ready for trial runs in November of this year and should be ready for deployment in December.

Teams Set for LDE Revision

More than 100 agricultural educators are set to convene in September to consider revisions to the state's leadership development rules.

The revision process is loosely connected to the National FFA's Career Development Event revision cycle. National qualifying events held in the fall and termed to be leadership development events are considered to be CDE's at the national level. However, the state's LDE advisory committee opted to defer the revision process until a near-final draft of the new Parliamentary Guide for FFA, the state's parliamentary procedure text, could be produced.

Revision teams will consider the relevance of each event to the instructional program, revisions to existing events and general rules and creation of new events. Revision timelines are intended to have a finished product ahead of the 2013 professional development conference to allow for adequate briefing and

inservice.

The revision teams will also be asked to crosswalk the events to Texas College and Career Readiness Standards, which were mandated by the 79th Texas Legislature, developed by the Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and approved by the State Board of Education. The CCRS crosswalk will provide a clear curricular tie for leadership development events and will assist teachers and administrators in justifying resource investment.

Proposed Language Addresses Participation of Ineligible Students

The State Career Development Advisory Committee approved new language which would change the way Texas FFA handles ineligible students. The language creates a new general rule allowing for the omission of scores of an ineligible participant, re-tabulation of scores and re-ranking of entries. The new language is still subject to approval of the Texas FFA Board of Directors.

The impetus for the rule change was the absence rule language specifically addressing academically ineligible students. The committee uses precedents set by the University Interscholastic League as a model.

When an ineligible student participates in events in which a team score is an aggregate of individual scores, such as golf or track, the scores of the ineligible student are deducted, team scores are recalculated and teams are re-ranked. In the case of team activities, such as basketball in which a team member's contribution cannot necessarily be numerically separated from the team performance, the entire team must be disqualified. In FFA, most career development events are like golf—an aggregate of individual scores, with the exception of those events that are team activities or include a team activity, such as marketing plan, agricultural sales and food science.

If approved by the Texas FFA Board of Directors, the following will become General Rule #4:

"If a student who is ineligible for any reason, including, but not limited to academic failure, FFA membership, course enrollment or participation on a national or state-winning team, the student's score shall be nullified and the team's score shall be re-tabulated. If the event is a team activity or includes a team activity, the team with the ineligible team member shall be disqualified. If it is determined that a teacher or other school representative has knowingly entered an ineligible student, the provisions of general rule #21 shall be applied."

The reference to general rule #21, refers to what is currently general rule #20, which addresses unethical behavior by a teacher.



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Foundation Update

Agricultural Science Educators Attend 2012 Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute

There were 40 teachers selected to attend the 2012 Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute, June 27-29, 2012 in Austin, Texas. Participants for the program were selected from a state-wide pool of applicants and received a full-scholarship to attend the professional development institute.

The theme for the 2012 Institute was *inside, outside and beyond*. During the week-long experience, participants were equipped with the tools, skills and knowledge to be stronger leaders in both the Agricultural Science Education profession and in their local community. Speakers at the institute featured the opportunity to learn from state-wide leaders such as The Honorable Todd Staples, Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, R. Keith Martin, CEO/Executive Director of the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo, Tom Pauken, Commissioner Representing employers for the Texas Workforce Commission, Dr. Rick Rigsby, and Jeff Lansdell, President, CEV. Other speakers from both the agriculture industry and education brought participants a national perspective on classroom and community leadership. Teachers who complete the curriculum are charged with implementing their personal action plans to enhance student learning and improve engagement between their programs and the local community.

It is the mission of the Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute to further the effectiveness and professional stature of agricultural science instructors and FFA programs in Texas. The institute is a collaboration of the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas – a professional organization for agriculture science teachers and supporters of agriculture education and the Texas FFA Foundation – an organization dedicated to preserving the strength and future of the Texas FFA.

The institute program and teacher scholarships are sponsored through the generous support of Texas-based private industry including the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo, Landmark Nurseries, Inc., Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, CEV Multimedia and Ag Workers Mutual Auto Insurance.

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2012 Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute Graduates



Photo by: Brenda Ladd Photography

Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Todd Staples is pictured with the 2012 Texas Agricultural Science Leadership graduates.

Leadership Institute Participants

Spenser Adams, *Sunnyvale High School*

Joe Barbour, *Florence High School*

Wayne Blount, *Denison High School*

Paul Boff, *Georgetown High School*

Amy Bowling, *Axtell ISD*

Jimmie Buford, *Clear Brook High School*

Brandon Callis, *Robstown High School*

Rebecca Carter, *Whitehouse High School*

Kelley Clements, *Grand Saline High School*

Tracy Cofield, *Venus High School*

Darrell Crafton, *Henrietta ISD*

Cody Davenport, *Arlington Heights High School*

Jessica Eckhardt, *Wimberley High School*

Kyle Gilliam, *Quanah High School*

Brittney Hall, *Angleton High School*

Amy Hartman, *Schulenburg High School*

Will Hartnett, *Wall High School*

Jayson Hill, *Brazos High School*

Kyle Holton, *Brock High School*

Jennifer Keel, *Lewisville High School*

Ashley Kellermeier, *San Angelo Central*

Ashley Larkin, *Cypress Creek High School*

Justin Little, *Sanger High School*

Stephanie Lynch, *Lytle High School*

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Hilary Otto, *Huffman ISD*

Charles Prause, *Bosqueville High School*

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Jim Self, *Follett High School*

Leslie Stanton, *Clear Lake High School*

Josh Stewart, *Ralls ISD*

Chelsea Taft, *Lorena High School*

Aimee Welle, *Bosqueville High School*

Alyson Whalen, *Luling High School*

Katherine Wohl, *Rudder High School*

Ashlee Woods, *Morton Ranch High School*



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Texas FFA Alumni

Update

The Tap of the Gavel

Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President

As the gavel tapped to end the 84th Annual State FFA Convention, the gavel also tapped to end an exciting and rewarding Alumni Auction. This year's auction raised an estimated \$17,000 for our alumni organization.

The Texas FFA Alumni appreciates the support of companies like McCoy's, Landmark Nurseries, Ag Workers Insurance, La Quinta Inns and Suites, Superior Trophies, River Star Farms, DJ's Fundraising of Texas, Seitz Fundraising, Fresh Country Fund Raising and the numerous other companies that are always found as exhibitors at our functions.

Thank you to our Basket Contest Participants; Gunter, Bellville, Canyon Lake, Rouse-Leander, Iowa Park, Farmersville, Judson, Weimar, Columbus & Gilmer. This year's Basket Contest winner was the Bellville FFA Affiliate. We would also like to especially thank the Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M FFA Collegiate Chapters for their participation in the contest. The Bearkats edged out the Aggies in the basket competition.

If you missed this year's auction, then you missed the opportunity to buy a squeeze chute, fencing/panels, tools, jewelry, boots and more. You also missed a great bidding war. The highlight of the evening for several in attendance was the bidding war for the claim to a speech by former State & National President Curtis Childers. The alumni appreciate Ag Workers Insurance agreeing to sponsor Curtis' travel for the occasion. We greatly appreciate Mr. Jim Prewitt and Landmark Nurseries for purchasing this package. This auction lot was enough to sponsor our grants for the upcoming year.

Let me remind you where this money goes. Each year the Texas FFA Alumni gives the following awards, and the individuals are recognized on stage at the State FFA Convention.

- Five Washington Leadership Conference Scholarships (\$600 each)
- Two \$1,000 scholarships

- Ten \$500 local grants
- \$1,000 each to the Texas FFA, the Texas FFA Foundation and the VATAT

All a FFA Chapter has to complete to be considered for the above mentioned awards is to have an active local FFA Alumni Affiliate (minimum of 10 members to pay state & national dues).





Texas Young Farmers Update

From the President's Pen

Connie Koopman, Texas Young Farmers President

Oh Holy and Most Loving Father we come to you to praise you and give you thanks. The summer has bought people from across our state together to share stories, make new friends, and to do business of their respective organization. This was all made possible by you. We thank you for keeping us safe in our travels and praise you for bringing special people into our lives. We ask you to continue to bless our fields with much needed rain. We have been blessed with the knowledge to provide food for our population, but we need you to continue to make it abundant. In your name we pray. Amen.

Wow! What an amazing summer. First stop was State FFA Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas. You know anything by the ocean is awesome, but when you put the field of blue and gold jackets next to it, you have a priceless scene.

My hat goes off to the ambassadors who went beyond their call to make sure our accommodations were adequate. Not only did they check on us throughout the day, they made sure I was where I needed to be on time and in the right room. They helped us carry our supplies to our vehicle when the booth closed, and they listened to stories we told of my days in FFA and I also

enjoyed listening to theirs. Tori Jones from Petersburg, Chanda Neal from Saltillo, Nizhoni Terronez from Iowa Park and Grant Hensarling from Woodville were part of our team of ambassadors. I feel I have a larger extended family who will keep me informed of new happenings and beginnings. And even though the State FFA Officers had a grueling schedule, they took time out to have breakfast with Don Beene and me. It was great to be able to hear the passion these young adults have for agriculture and our future. You are the reason Young Farmers are alive, and we are honored to spend a week each year with you.

Then we traveled to Amarillo to attend the VATAT Professional Development Conference. I was able to speak at some of the area meetings stressing the importance of Young Farmers. We are here for adult education and a support group for your FFA Chapter. The Young Farmers gave away five \$1,000 scholarships and one \$2,000 scholarship to deserving students at the FFA Convention. For you to have students qualify for these scholarships you need to have a Young Farmer Chapter.

We made contact with agricultural teachers who are interested in beginning a chapter. I believe all chapters need a support system, and with the budget cuts facing the schools, our organization is very important. If you have a Young Farmer Chapter, an Alumni or a Booster,



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they are all good if they are there for the right reason. They can be beneficial, as well as devastating. If you are interested in starting a chapter, e-mail or call me, and I will be more than happy to come and make a presentation.

In between these two conventions the State Board held their summer meeting in Sugarland. We had a National meeting on Friday night and on Saturday conducted business for the State Convention. We are meeting in early August to finalize registration and workshops. Information will be in my next article and up on the Young Farmer website. We will be touring George Ranch and the Igloo plant. We will be back at the hotel around 4 p.m. and you will have ample time to visit with other members, shop, dine or rest before we start Ag Olympics later that evening.

Saturday will be the business session, the scholarship auction, workshops and will conclude with the banquet. At the last State Convention it was stated our award applications are too long, so we have revamped them and made them as simple as possible. The awards are posted on the website and will also be mailed to all advisors and chapter presidents. You will also go from the local level to the state level. With this we should have 41 entries in each category. Every chapter can enter someone for each award. If we find sponsors for our awards there will be a monetary award attached. If

not, you will only receive a plaque. If there is a monetary award attached, your presence is necessary to receive it. The scrapbook will be judged at the state convention and it is not a contemporary scrapbook. You will be judged 50 percent on creativity and 50 percent on information. The ag expressions essay topics will be announced in my next article. In the photo contest, each paid member may enter one photo per category. The categories are Ag at Work, Agriculture Leisure, Agricultural Animals (no people in photo), Ag Equipment and Ag Landscape. All photos must be from within the State of Texas.

The workshops will be announced next month. We will be having new workshops in addition to the older ones. We will have a CEU course offered for our members who need to acquire their hours.

All of our events will take place at the Marriott Town Square in Sugarland. If you have not been here recently or never, make plans to attend. Within a two block walking distance there are over 50 stores offering a range of accessories and eating places. There are also two spas there for the wives who would like to be pampered.

We hope to have a large attendance and are excited about the activities we have planned. The Marriott is giving us a room rate of \$99 per night, and this is a very spacious hotel.

Until next time, be safe, love life and praise God.



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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

September 2012

4th - 28th - Regular Swine Tag Order begins - Austin

6th - 15th - West Texas Fair & Rodeo - Abilene

10th - Texas FFA Board of Directors Meeting - Austin

11th - West Texas Fair & Rodeo Ag Mechanics Show - Abilene

28th - State Fair of Texas begins - Dallas

29th - Late Swine Tag Order begins - Austin

October 2012

1st - San Antonio Calf Scramble Applications due - San Antonio

1st - Houston Calf Scramble Applications posted online

9th - State Fair of Texas Public Speaking Contest - Dallas

9th - State Fair of Texas AgriScience Fair - Dallas

9th - State Fair of Texas Ag Mech and Tractor Tech - Dallas

9th - Agriculture Awareness (State Fair Youth Leadership Day) - Dallas

13th - Heart of Texas Fair - Waco

21st - State Fair of Texas Ends

24th - 27th - National FFA Convention - Indianapolis

29th - Deadline to order late lamb and goat tags

31st - Late Swine Tag Order Ends

31st - Last day to validate sheep and goats

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State Fair Validation

Swine validation for major shows is available online under the "Resources" tab at www.texasffa.org. Regular tags will go on sale Sept. 4 for \$8.00.

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