



VATAT

News

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

Points to Ponder

Charles Prause, Bosqueville

The month of June is upon us, chapter banquets are over and the State FFA Degree Check is just around the corner, June 12-13, in Waco. Now we start all over, planning and preparing for the next school year, professional development workshops and making preparations for the State FFA Convention in Fort Worth. It never ends. That is the life of an ag teacher.

Be sure to take time off to be with your family. We need to remember that family comes first and we need to spend time with them relaxing and doing fun activities.

I would like to congratulate those ag teachers who have had children graduate from high school or college this spring. Now you have the privilege to help them start the next chapter in their life. Trust me; it is an exciting time. My daughters are starting new chapters as I write this month's article. I could not be more proud of each of them and the accomplishments they have achieved over the past year.

A reminder to NAAE members, don't forget that the NAAE Region II Conference will be held in Manhattan, Kansas June 15 - 18. They will be offering some really good tours, food and fun. You can find information about the NAAE Region II Conference on the NAAE website.

While you are wrapping up this school year I urge you to take some time and develop or revise your summer plan. This is a great opportunity for you to communicate with your principal,

CTE director, superintendent and others school administrators. I encourage you to communicate what duties you will be performing throughout the summer months. Throughout my teaching experience I have taken the time to sit down with my calendar at the end of the school year to revise my summer plan. After revising, I email my summer plan to my principal, superintendent and human resources department. I also print one out and put it in a file. This plan is for your protection as an ag teacher, especially if you are on an eleven or twelve month contract. Your administration will appreciate the efforts you have made in communicating what you are doing throughout the summer. There should never be a question when you are on the job. If you have never written a summer plan and have questions feel free to contact Mr. McClure at the VATAT office. Remember, communication is a core value.

In the last issue, Karen Jones, our Membership Coordinator requested that if you are retiring or know someone that is please contact the VATAT office. Also make sure you visit the VATAT website to check on your tenure status. If you feel that there is a mistake regarding your tenure please contact Mrs. Jones.

Do not forget, conference registration is now open and can be accessed through the VATAT online system. You can still register for pre-conference workshops. More



information regarding spouse and family activities are to come. I hope you are making plans to attend.

I wish you the best in finishing out your school year. If you are looking to move school districts or if you are a graduating college senior looking for that first ag teaching job, don't forget about the VATAT Careers page on the VATAT website. There are new jobs posted continuously. I just pray that each one will be filled by the first day of school this upcoming fall.

Be safe, stay healthy and spend time with your family. Until next time. See You Down the Road!

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VATAT Conference Information

- Conference registration is open and can be accessed through the VATAT online system.
- You can still register for pre-conference workshops. On-site registration will be available for remaining spots.
- Do you plan on registering and paying for the conference on-site? If so, please visit the cashier's table. No payments will be accepted at area tables.
- Please check your membership profile online to confirm your contact information is correct. If you have any questions please contact the VATAT office.
- Be sure to check the VATAT website for continuous updates on workshops and activities.



Conference Attire:

Monday, July 28 - Casual

Tuesday, July 29 - Business Professional

Wednesday, July 30 - Business Casual

Thursday, July 31 - Business Casual

Friday, August 1 - Business Professional

Conference 2014- Welcome to Abilene

Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director

Many teachers are implementing their summer plans by now. I hope that everyone is making plans for the 2014 VATAT Professional Development Conference in Abilene, July 28 through August 1. Every location for conference has unique advantages and disadvantages, and Abilene is no exception. When you compare it to last year in Corpus Christi, you will find some differences. The good, our location is more centrally located in the state, we are offered more economical dining and lodging and we will be one of the big events for the city of Abilene this summer. The bad, the civic center offers limited space and there is no beach.

With that said, we will have adequate room for general sessions and workshops. Some rooms will be a tight fit for workshops, and we will even have Area VIII meet about a half a block away from the civic center in the historic Paramount Theater. I think they will enjoy the venue. We are in the process of finalizing all the workshop plans. They will be conducted by a mixture of teachers, businesses, industry representatives and University staff members.

The exhibit hall will be at capacity. I have had to turn away loyal exhibitors because there is simply no more room. We have grown our exhibitor and sponsor list since the agreement was made to go to Abilene, and it is not fun to explain why we can't accommodate exhibitor partners who want and need to be at conference. I sincerely hope they return next year in Lubbock, where we will have more room.

Those of you who have attended conference for years will see many familiar workshops and exhibits, but some changes also. There will be a CHL certification pre-conference workshop, we are planning a family movie night on Tuesday at the Paramount for those who might be interested and we will have activities for the younger kids at family night.

Planning summer conference is a big undertaking, and my staff and I put numerous hours into the process. It is our VATAT signature event, and one in which we take great pride. I hope to see you there.

**STAY CONNECTED
WITH THE VATAT**





Texas FFA Update

Constitutional Check-Up

Tom Maynard, Texas FFA Executive Director

The official manual states that all members should have FFA knowledge and that all officers should have knowledge and understanding of the chapter, state and national constitutions. How would your students measure up on this one? What about you?

It's vitally important. I have had a number of calls this spring from administrators and concerned citizens regarding officer elections and other proceedings being conducted in a manner contrary to the local chapter constitution and bylaws.

It seems that the local advisor is unfamiliar with the governing documents of their own chapter. Things get a bit awkward when an administrator requests a copy of the constitution on file in our office and what is transcribed in that official document is not what is actually happening. This reflects poorly on a teacher, erodes public confidence and could result in having the results of an officer election or other action overturned.

Operating in a manner consistent with your governing documents will help keep you out of hot water on some issues, but the most important outcome is the instructional outcome. Ultimately, we are teaching young people how to run an organization and become equipped for citizenship and self government.

We suggest that you add to your list of summer plan items, an annual check-up on your governing documents: constitution and bylaws.

Annual Constitution & Bylaws Check-Up

(1) Request a copy of the state office file copy of your constitution/bylaws. You may have updated your constitution and bylaws since they were filed in Austin. If what is on file is different than your current documents, send in a new copy. Staff can scan and e-mail what is currently on file.

(2) From the Texas FFA website (Under resources>toolbox), download the document titled "Standards for governing documents." This checklist addresses all of the most features common to all constitutions and/or bylaws. All of these elements should be included in your chapter's constitution/bylaws.

(3) From the same page (chapter toolbox), download the sample constitution and bylaws. This is an editable MS Word document, so you can edit or copy from it as much as you would like.

(4) Set aside ample time to meet with your officers to comb through the constitution and bylaws and develop recommendations for amendments. Your officers may decide that the changes are so sweeping, that a constitutional revision would be more appropriate. In this case, the officers would be proposing a new document that would supplant the old, rather than attempting to approve individual amendments in a piecemeal fashion.

(5) Decide what is appropriate for your governing documents. Provisions of the constitution and bylaws should provide the foundational framework for the organization. These documents should not be overly prescriptive and have language that is better delivered in chapter rules or policies. You do not want to include anything that may change or that may require a degree of flexibility operating within the school environment. Your constitution and bylaws may reference chapter policies that can be adopted and amended by a simple majority vote at a regular chapter meeting.

(6) Get approval. After your student leadership team (officers and other recognized leaders such as standing committee chairmen) approves the draft of the new or amended document(s) they should present them to local administrators. This demonstrates the hands-on student leadership development process to your school leadership and gives the administration a little bit of ownership in the process. It's a great experience for the students too! In one of your early meetings—August or September, the officers should post the new or revised documents as a discussion item. As a matter of procedure, the revisions should be presented at one meeting and then adopted at a subsequent meeting. In addition, the documents should be posted online and made as accessible as possible. Transparency is always best policy. Be sure that the adoption of the amendments or revised document is posted as an action item at the meeting at which the chapter will take action.

(7) Document action. Remember that whatever is not reflected in the minutes of a meeting, didn't happen. The chapter's minutes should reflect presentation of the constitution and bylaws at one meeting and their adoption at the subsequent meeting. The record should reflect that a quorum was present and the two-thirds vote required to adopt or amend a constitution. Usually, bylaws only require a majority.

(8) Post, File and Teach. File your newly revised constitution and bylaws with the state office. This is a great insurance policy should your document be destroyed or lost. As a matter of record, you may want to include as an addendum, the minutes that reflect the presentation and adoption. Also, make sure your officers post the new document online and that all stakeholders have equal access. Furthermore, take some time in the FFA portion of your classes to teach your students about the local constitution and bylaws and why they are important, not just to the local FFA chapter, but to any organization. Your students may not immediately grasp or appreciate this information, but they will thank you later.

(9) Create Companion Policies, Procedures and Rules. Where your constitution references chapter-adopted rules or procedures, be sure to get a head-start with your officers on the creation of these documents. For example, an officer application, testing and interview procedure and contract would not be included in the constitution and bylaws, but adopted as rules. Be sure that adoption of all such rules is reflected in the minutes.

(10) Adhere to your constitution and bylaws. We are a nation of laws, and it is vitally important that we teach and model the rule of law. We must also teach our students that if they dislike a particular law or rule, there is a procedure to change it. It's all about process and preparing our young people to be citizens of influence.

Abilene FFA Member Named Best in Texas

Ashley Dunkerley, Communications Coordinator

Abilene FFA member, Katie Holt, was recently named the Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Student by the Texas Career and Technology Council (TCTC). This state-wide award is in recognition of the student's achievements, academics, service and participation during high school.

In addition to serving as president of her local FFA chapter, Katie is an active member of her school's National Honor Society, anti-bullying committee and a spokesperson for CTE/signature studies.

The Best of Texas Awards are sponsored by the Texas Career and Technology Council. The awards were initiated to recognize outstanding achievements by students enrolled in career and technical education and exemplary contributions by businesses and community leaders who have dedicated their support to career and technical programs. A cash scholarship and commemorative plaque was given to winners in each of the seven divisions.

Texas Career and Technology Council. is an organization representing seven professional organizations of career and technical education. Texas Career and Technology Councilstrives to maintain one unified voice, speaking for and supporting career and technical programs.



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Texas FFA Foundation Update

Texas FFA Foundation – Ambassadors 101

Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director

A pretty common question I get from teachers is, “What is this Ambassador program? What kind of students are you looking for? What’s in it for them?” All very good questions. The program was actually born out of a discussion between a former Foundation board member and FFA staff regarding student assistants to serve at convention with some additional training from that of a Courtesy Corp member. As the Foundation grew and our responsibilities to stakeholders during the convention grew, we knew we needed help. Our initial step included using some Courtesy Corp members to help us greet special guest. As our sponsors grew and philosophy of delivering exceptional customer service, the decision was made to create a group of Ambassadors to help tell the Texas FFA story to our special guests, sponsors and stakeholders who attend the annual convention.

One of the cornerstones to the Ambassador program is leadership development and training of the core value, servant leadership. Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches lives, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a better world. If all we do is take from the FFA, then when our students become citizens they take because that becomes the core value we’ve taught them. To the contrary, learning to serve in high school and help meet the needs of others will foster that same attitude, and ultimately assimilating itself into a core life philosophy of serving in a community where a person may live and work. Looking to meet the needs of others is not something you just do in four years of the FFA; the Ambassadors program is the minor leagues to prepare students for the big league of life and being ready to serve with purpose and meet the needs of a growing world.

While servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase servant leadership was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, Greenleaf said: “The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first.”

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the organization to which they

belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the top of the pyramid, servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

The Foundation Ambassadors serve as hosts for special guests, sponsors and dignitaries on behalf of the Texas FFA during the largest youth led convention in Texas. Candidates apply through a competitive application process, with emphasis on FFA involvement, individual accomplishments and community service. Ambassadors receive extensive training to prepare them for their week of service. Each student Ambassador is assigned to a VIP serving as their respective agricultural science/FFA host for the week. In addition, the Ambassadors have a unique opportunity of experiencing firsthand the behind the scene complexities of convention week.

2014 Texas FFA Foundation Ambassadors for the 86th Annual Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth are:

Ambassadors

Lexie Bain - Canyon FFA
Colton Bourquin - Lubbock Cooper FFA Chapter
Jacey Snapp - Lubbock Cooper FFA
Nicholas Caylor - Spring Branch FFA
Rachael Fargerson - Spring Branch FFA
Rosemary Fazzino - Rudder FFA Chapter
Alexandra Jurica - Ridge Point FFA
Baillie McManners - Iola FFA
Stephen Webb - Magnolia West FFA
Macey Baber - Henrietta FFA
Emilee Jackson - Hico FFA
Mable Jordan - Iowa Park
Lauren Kale - Hico FFA
Abigail Kurszewski - Burkburnett FFA
Jordan May - Rider FFA
Will Shaw - Rider FFA
Morgan Yandell - Holliday FFA
Michaela Yandell - Holliday FFA
Jessica Barbosa - R.L. Turner FFA
Cameron Bates - Bland FFA
Ashtyn Carr - Prosper FFA
Luke Osburn - Gunter FFA
Sage Stover - Ponder FFA
Sarah Morris - Avery FFA
Hanna Perry - New Boston FFA
Jake Traylor - Gilmer FFA
Ashley Merritt - Navarro FFA
David Rihn - Hondo FFA
Drew Ferguson - Groesbeck FFA
Kayla McCabe - Ennis FFA
Kade Griffith - Alto FFA

Victoria Martin - Grapeland FFA
Peyton Scroggins - Woodville FFA Chapter

Sr. Ambassadors

Rhett Bain* - Canyon FFA
Ian Cobb - New Home FFA
Lindsey Cobb* - New Home FFA
Alec Winfrey - Seminole FFA Chapter
Mary Frances Fazzino - Rudder FFA Chapter
Brooke Wallace - Boling FFA
Abigail Alejandro - Rider FFA
Hagan Dutton* - Iowa Park FFA
Mackenzie Yandell - Holliday FFA
Alexandra Barbosa* - R.L. Turner FFA
Crystal Chambliss - Mansfield FFA
Cody May* - Crowley FFA
Meagan Coberley* - Sulphur Bluff FFA
Jenifer Wilkes - Simms FFA
Kenneth Wiese - Cranfills Gap FFA
Kye Maddox - Tilden FFA
** Indicates Team Leader*

Alternates

Grace Jahn - Alpine FFA Chapter
Sterling Lee - Snyder FFA Chapter
Lindsey Crafton - Henrietta FFA
Clayton Garrett - Marshall FFA
Cammi Selby - Scurry-Rosser FFA
Hayden Blumberg - Sinton FFA
Karina Saucedo - Cotulla FFA



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Texas FFA Alumni Update

Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on the front door forever

Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President

“Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on the front door forever.” I find this quote somewhat humorous. Does it pertain to my life? Do I check to see what opportunities are banging on my front door?

I beg to differ on opportunity knocking only once. Recently I have been harping on the opportunities that the Texas FFA Alumni offers its affiliates. Please allow me to bang on the front door once again and reiterate what we offer.

Your students still have time to apply for our \$1000 scholarship; the deadline is June 1, 2014. Also, your affiliate still has time to apply for a \$500 grant. Every year Texas FFA Alumni affiliates receive grant money to assist their local FFA Chapter. Some have helped purchase t-shirts for its members. Others have used the money to start a community garden. It has also been used to assist chapters in purchasing new livestock equipment.

When applying for a grant you must be prepared to answer the following questions. What is your project? What do you want to accomplish? What is your plan of action? How will this project make an impact on your members and/or program? Also, be prepared to have an estimate on what your project will cost.

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.

Each year the Alumni Council sets a goal to increase membership, participation by local affiliates and cash flow. The budget fluctuates according to the total amount of membership dues collected, in-kind donations made to the Texas FFA Alumni and the success of our annual auction held in conjunction at the Texas FFA State Convention.

So don't let an opportunity pass you by. Participate in the Texas FFA Alumni Auction Thursday night during the State FFA Convention.

For more information on the Texas FFA Alumni and the Texas FFA Alumni Basket Contest, visit the Texas FFA Alumni page on Facebook or visit www.texasffaalumni.org.



**Texas FFA Alumni Chapter
Basket Contest**
Tuesday, July 10th

You are asked to fill a basket and enter your FFA alumni chapter in the Texas FFA Alumni Chapter Basket Contest. Each alumni chapter may enter one basket. It may have homemade jellies, items made by local companies, home-made items, items from the local Ag Department, caps, etc.

Baskets should be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 10th. The baskets will be judged on a penny (\$.01) per vote. The basket with the most votes will receive the rotating “Basket Winner” plaque. The baskets become the property of the Texas FFA Alumni Association and will be sold in the auction on Thursday evening.

Contest Rules

- Baskets need to be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday.
- Contest ends on Wednesday when the exhibit hall closes and the votes will be counted that evening.
- A list of the items included in the basket should be clearly labeled on the basket.
- The basket can be of any creation.
- No alcohol should be included in the basket.

Remember

The deadline for the Texas FFA Alumni
\$500 grants and \$1000
student scholarship is

June 1, 2014



Texas Young Farmer Update

Notes From the Executive Secretary

Don Beene, Texas Young Farmers Executive Secretary

This year is really going by in a hurry. Summer is here and another school year is behind us. I encourage you to read the article written by the Bryan Young Farmer's advisor, Terry Hausenfluck, regarding the struggles of their program and how they have grown. His insight may be of assistance to your program; however it may not since each community is different.

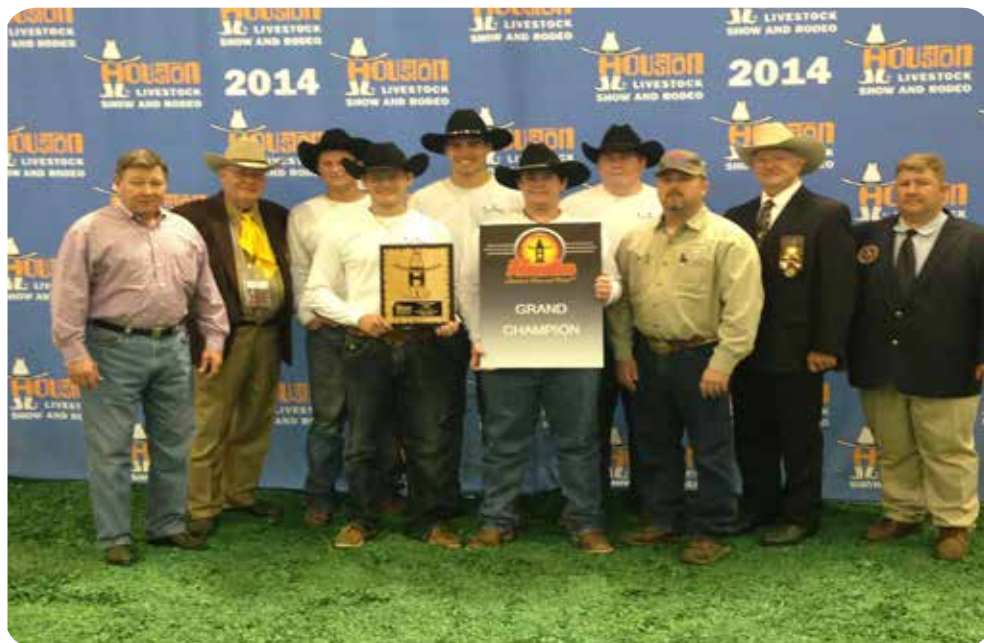
This morning I read an interesting article from Jay Eudy titled "High School Ag Programs Flourish as Farms Dwindle." It was a very good article and I feel that it is true for the most part. I know that agriculture education enrolment is up in Texas, and college students are continuing to major in agriculture programs.

The 2014 Texas Young Farmer scholarship winners have been selected. Their pictures and brief summary will be in next month's newsletter and posted on our website. We had a great deal of qualified applicants this year. There were more entries this year than we have

had since 2005. We will be discussing possible changes to our scholarship application process at our next Young Farmer Board meeting on May 17. If you have any suggestions please let me know.

I would also like to encourage you to stop by the Young Farmers Booth at the Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth, July 14-18, and the VATAT Conference in Abilene, July 28- August 1. We look forward to visiting with each of you.

This year we have 44 schools involved in the Young Farmer program. I hope that we can increase the number of members and chapters over the next year. I continue to believe that every program should have adult education. I also believe that the Young Farmer program provides an excellent opportunity to support your local FFA chapter and hold community activities in order to make your community aware of your existence. Hope your summer goes well.



The Texas Young Farmers provide up to \$8,000 in scholarships each year. A \$2,000 scholarship is given through the Texas FFA Foundation, five \$1,000 scholarships are given to FFA students in schools that have a Young Farmer Program and a \$1,000 scholarship is given to the Grand Champion Agriculture Mechanic Project at the Houston Livestock Show if there is a Young Farmer program at that school; if not the chapter receives \$500. This year presented \$500 to Kendal County 4H as they do not have a Young Farmer Chapter in Boerne ISD.

From the Ashes With Young Blood

Terry Hausenfluck, Bryan Young Farmers

The Bryan Young Farmers had a long history of support from the Bryan FFA. The Bryan ag department was adorned with their successes. That all came to an end as the elder ag teachers began to retire in the mid-nineties. One day the treasurer came in with a check made out to the Bryan FFA and said deposit this in the FFA account, we are done.

I had been teaching in Bryan for sixteen years and was not prepared for this. My young teaching partner had wanted to start a booster club so I let her take that concept and run with it. This organization was made up of, as you would expect, parents of current students. Their purpose was to support the Bryan FFA chapter. For about five years they cycled in and out but we always had their support.

During this time, several of my graduates wanted to be a part of a group to give back. I asked them to participate in the booster club. They went to several meetings and then told me "We need to talk!" They expressed to me that they were not accepted as adults even though most of them were now in their twenties. They felt as if they had no future with this group, but they still wanted to grow individually and support the program that nurtured them.

In November of 2000, this group of former Bryan FFA members re-chartered the Bryan Young Farmers with a goal of continuing their education in agriculture, further enhancing their leadership development and supporting their FFA Chapter. The first available State Young Farmer Convention for them was held in January of 2001. They were called the youngest Young Farmers in the state. They began to make their mark. Area and state activities

became important to their growth. Attendance at the state convention armed them with a desire and passion for the Young Farmers. They were graciously accepted at functions as adults. Carrie Bates Halpain and Jason Benson have risen to the office of State Young Farmer President. They are inspirations to our members. Even though they are in their thirties, which is still young, we are constantly trying to motivate our eighteen year old graduates to be a part.

The Bryan Young Farmers is not a large or dominant group in our community but they are striving to grow and influence more young people. An earlier article recalled the Bryan Young Farmers struggle to establish a kettle corn fundraiser that would provide funds for scholarships for FFA members. This is such a priority that all Young Farmer activity expenses have been personal responsibilities of the attending members. This year the Bryan Young Farmers have expanded their support from Bryan High School to also include a second high school, Rudder. We hope to gain graduates from both schools as members in the future.

I have shared our struggles and triumphs. I don't have the answers to our State Convention participation decline and I don't pretend to know the struggles of other Young Farmer groups across the state. As a former ag teacher, current lead advisor to the Bryan Young Farmers and co-chair of the host committee for the 2015 and 2016 State Young Farmer Conventions to be held in Bryan, I would like to continue to encourage you and challenge you as I did at the convention in San Antonio. We are the solution to the strength of the Texas Young Farmers and we owe it this organization to motivate and instill passion in the next generation. Let's work together with our officer teams to do that these next two years. The State Young Farmer Convention is that important!



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TEXAS TEAM AG ED EVENTS

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

August 2014

1st Texas FFA payment deadline - all accounts must be paid in full for the 2013-2014 school year.

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of Texas

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