

# TEXAS

## FARM FRESH E-HARVEST

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

### November 2019

#### Farm Fresh Spotlight Story

##### Farm to School Census Closes Nov. 4!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School census closes soon and Texas is a long way from reaching the statewide response goal of 80 percent. Less than 35 percent of Texas school districts have completed the Farm to School Census!

##### Encourage your district to complete the census!

The Farm to School Census is the only national survey that examines local food purchasing, school gardens, and agricultural education. USDA uses the data to inform decisions regarding the Farm to School Grant Program, training and technical assistance strategies, and resource development. The census also helps other national, state, and local decision-makers better understand current Farm to School activities and plan for future activities and interventions.

USDA is expecting a very high response rate, and a lot of effort is being put into encouraging everyone to complete the survey. Please take the time to complete this very important survey before the deadline, November 4, 2019. Each district should have received an individualized link to the census in an email the week of September 9, 2019. The survey asks for information related to local sourcing, types and frequency of local products purchased, the dollar amount spent on all food and local foods, and the degree to which local purchasing is expected to increase, stay the same, or decrease.

If your district needs assistance completing the census or would like to have the personalized link resent, please contact the census contractor, Abt Associates, by calling the toll free help line at **855-452-5794** or sending an email to [farmtoschool@abtassoc.com](mailto:farmtoschool@abtassoc.com).



#### 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

#### School Spotlight

Congratulations to the more than 200 districts and charters that completed the 2019 Farm Fresh

## Challenge!

**Don't Delay: Complete the Farm Fresh Challenge participation [form](#) by Nov. 15, 2019, to receive recognition for efforts.**

The 2019 Farm Fresh Challenge exceeded all expectations. Millions of students were given the opportunity to learn about the importance of Texas agriculture and enjoy Texas grown foods thanks to the statewide efforts. If your district or charter organization was one of the many that participated in the Farm Fresh Challenge, complete the final step to earn recognition.

*All that stands between you and your celebration is a brief online [form](#) to show how your schools completed the 2019 challenge parameters.* This form must be completed by **Nov. 15, 2019** for recognition eligibility.

New this year, TDA is requiring that all districts submit screen shots of the *Be Social* parameter. This may include a screenshot of a social media post, a picture of a bulletin board, or a newsletter or flyer that was sent home to students.

If you have questions or challenges completing the form, email [FarmFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:FarmFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov).

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.

## Producer Spotlight

### Farm Fresh Network Spotlight

#### Become an Approved USDA Vendor

A new year means new possibilities for potential vendors interested in participating in upcoming bids for the Commodity Procurement Program (CPP) through USDA. Here are some helpful tips that will provide a better understanding of CPP purchases and how to become an approved vendor:

- For a better idea of the products CPP purchases, please visit the [Purchase Programs: Solicitation & Awards](#) Web page. This Web page has links to the Master Solicitation, Purchase Schedule, and upcoming bids.
- To gain a greater understanding of USDA food standards, start by learning about the commodity specifications found on the [Product Specifications & Requirements](#) Web page.
- On your company capability letter, please remember to list out the product you want to provide, its pack size, and your capacity.

For more information, review the recorded webinar posted on the [New Vendor](#) Web page. If you still have questions, please contact [NewVendor@usda.gov](mailto:NewVendor@usda.gov) for help navigating the approval process.

#### Welcome new Farm Fresh Network members!

In October, TDA welcomed **15** new members to the Farm Fresh Network, including companies that provide Texas eggs and local honey.

If you haven't visited [Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork](http://Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork) recently, now is a great time to explore all the food companies taking advantage of the network.



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This product was funded by USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.  
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