



2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

MEMBERSHIP

518,502 Total Member Families

4,750 Member Family Gain

144 Counties Gaining

88.63% Retention

'VOICE OF AGRICULTURE'

Public Relations

BLM/Red River Issue: Staff continued to work with TFB Government Affairs to monitor and publicize the Red River/BLM issue. Several stories were written and published. There was substantial online activity at various times during the year. In July, the issue culminated with Tommy Henderson's success reacquiring his land via a color of title. A statewide news release, full coverage in TFB publications, and heavy social media activity were part of the TFB PR response. *(See also "National Legislative Accomplishments")*

WOTUS: TFB PR messaging—through social media, publications and newsletters—resulted in more than 630 WOTUS comments.

Texas Food Connection Week: TFB PR conducted Texas Food Connection Week activities—primarily in support of CFBS as the major media event of the year—providing support materials that included:

- A local proclamation for city and/or county officials to declare an event
- Speech materials
- Fill-in-the-blank news releases
- How to information on how to work with local media
- Prepared advertising and radio copy for advertisements
- Talking points

More than 70 CFBS participated in Food Connection Week activities, with many using TFB materials and traditional media or ad placement to promote their events. Over 20 used their Facebook pages to cover and publicize the event. The "farmers' share" meal events remain the most popular. Innovative ideas like "barrel painting" contests for local fairgrounds use, canned food drives and others were implemented. There were many contributions to local food pantries. CFBS were encouraged to have a FCW activity at any time during the year.

U.S. Farmer and Ranchers Alliance: TFB PR continued to work with USFRA on uniform messaging. USFRA research was monitored and utilized in TFB's own messaging and communications activities. Staff attended the USFRA Annual Meeting/Communications Advisory Committee Meeting/Board Meeting in Sacramento.

Social Media: Through social media networks, TFB Public Relations drives timely issues important to agriculture and promotes an open discussion.

- Facebook has grown to more than 35,000 followers. Engagement has gone from a "daily talking about" number to more than 20,000 many months this year.
- A total of 108 county Farm Bureaus have started Facebook pages. A weekly Facebook "tip" sheet is sent to all CFBs.
- Twitter has grown to 13,500 followers, with engagement increased by more than 50 percent.
- TFB started an Instagram account this year, gaining over 1,222 followers in less than 6 months.
- We continue to train leadership in social media, holding social media training sessions and tutoring the board of directors on Facebook and Twitter. A training session was held at the Summer Commodity Conference for 60 agricultural advocates.

Blogs: *Your Texas Agriculture Minute* (a TFB weekly commentary in both print and audio form) is in its second year. It has appeared more than 100 times in newspapers around the state and is followed heavily in social media. *Texas Agriculture Talks* and *Texas Table Top* remain successful products.

Electronic Communications:

- *The Friday Report*, a leadership electronic newsletter, continues to be a popular venue with over a 33 percent open rate—stellar for industry standards.
- *Texas Agriculture* continues to be published 20 times a year and is the primary member communication.
- The print version of *Texas Neighbors* has been discontinued in favor of a state-of-the-art multimedia digital version.
- *Texas Agriculture Daily* was launched in a new electronic email this year that allows the use of color photographs and advertising.

Awards: TFB Public Relations Division staff was recognized with three awards of excellence and four honorable mentions in the AFBF Communications Awards Program. Texas Forestry Association recognized Gary Joiner of the TFB Radio Network with its 2015 Media Award for helping to communicate forestry messages across the state.

Texas Agriculture Challenges Team: By extending invitations to recent graduates TFB training programs, the number of TACT participants has grown from 100 to 211.

County Farm Bureau Services:

- Nearly 190 of the 206 CFBs used the newsletter service this year to give notice of CFB meetings and key CFB activities.
- Provided monthly fill-in-the-blank news releases that have appeared more than 2,800 times this year in newspapers across the state.

TFB Radio Network:

- Reached the most affiliates in its 13-year history. From a start of 6 stations in January 2002, it has grown to 68 in October 2015. This accounts for a statewide audience rating at 42.1%, compared to 25.5% for our nearest competitor, Texas State Network.
- With the new talent line-up of Curt Lancaster, Tom Nicolette, Gary Joiner, Dr. Bob Judd and solid proven programming, TFB Network has forged a dominant lead over every state competitor and has been the statewide leader now for the last four AMR ratings in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015.

Videos Produced:

- 72 videos
- 37 agricultural video news stories
- 12 TFB News stories
- 6 Voices of Agriculture RFD programs
- 3 TFB Summer Meeting Interviews
- 3 Planet Agriculture videos
- 10 State Convention videos
- 1 Special video (Food Today: Animal Welfare)

Video Statistics (Jan. 1 – Oct. 22, 2015)

- Voices of Agriculture | RFD-TV: 477,000 viewers (68,000 average viewers per show week)
- Brightcove: 2,506 video views
- YouTube: 107,954 video views
- Facebook: 2,454,400 video views

Educational Programs

Summer Agricultural Institute: Conducted the 21st annual institute at Tarleton State University. 28 teachers attended; 20 CFBS provided scholarships for teachers to attend the institute, with some counties sponsoring multiple teachers; each teacher attending received a Celestron Digital Microscope for use in her classroom, along with AITC resources. Field trips and exposure to experts in the field helped teachers make the connection between real world agricultural experiences and the classroom.

Teacher Workshops: Conducted 11 one-day workshops. 208 teachers attended; one teacher at each workshop received a Celestron Digital Microscope for use in the classroom. These science-based workshops provide Ag in the Classroom materials and hands-on lessons that blend agricultural concepts with current teaching standards.

AITC Matching Grant: Matching Grants were made to 44 counties. TFB awarded more than \$9,100 to county Farm Bureaus who sponsored Ag in the Classroom activities. These efforts by counties impacted more than 15,800 individuals. This has been a record school year for county involvement with more than \$32,000 spent in promoting agriculture.

AITC Outstanding Teacher Award: Presented to Darla Morrow from Midland County. She was recognized at the annual meeting of Texas Farm Bureau in Corpus Christi and the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Louisville, KY.

School Visit Program: Visited pre-registered elementary schools in the urban triangle that extends southwest from DFW to San Antonio and eastward to Houston. More than 6,300 elementary students took part in the 30-45 minute, fully curriculum-aligned lesson, which focused on farmers' and ranchers' roles. This outreach provided some 320 teachers with Ag in the Classroom curriculum and provided opportunity to share information on other TFB programs.

Garden Grant: With local CFBs acting as the point of contact, schools were encouraged to apply for TFB's \$500 grant opportunity, to be used in the implementation or improvement of school gardens and greenhouses. Eighteen TFB grants have been awarded. Seven CFB's took advantage of the opportunity to provide additional funding at the county level, providing funds in excess of \$2,750 to nine approved schools.

Mobile Learning Barn Trailers

Showed to 33,121 schoolchildren in 166 days.

Showed to 30,455 people in mixed groups of adults/children in 62 days.

Urban Relations/Planet Agriculture

Planet Agriculture displayed at the following shows across the state, exposing over 550,000 visitors to how agriculture impacts their lives daily. Planet Agriculture attends seven stock shows throughout the state of Texas each year.

- Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo
- San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo
- Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show
- West Texas Fair and Rodeo
- East Texas State Fair
- State Fair of Texas
- Heart of Texas Fair and Rodeo

89 CFB leaders from 32 counties worked a total 272 shifts staffing the exhibit during the 102 days Planet Agriculture was active at stock shows during 2015.

Planet Agriculture's *Harvest Experience* trailer registered over 12,000 hits on its digital counter in 2015, which equates to approximately 55,000 visitors during the 2015 Planet Agriculture stock show tour. The trailer made stops at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo, West Texas Fair and Rodeo and the State Fair of Texas.

During the summer of 2015, a portion of Planet Agriculture debuted in the Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock. The display was available at the museum from mid-June through the middle of August.

TFB Legal Defense Fund

Water Cases:

The rule for "Waters of the United States" litigation

TFB, along with AFBF, the Matagorda County Farm Bureau and other agricultural and industry groups filed suit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new rule under the Clean Water Act for the definition of "Waters of the United States." The suit was filed on July 2, 2015, in federal district court in Galveston. The group also filed protective complaints in the federal appellate court. The suits challenge the vagueness and the constitutionality of the new rule, and are requesting the courts to vacate the rule and enjoin EPA from enforcing it. The rule has been stayed by the U.S. 6th Circuit pending a decision of whether the rule will be challenged at the district court level or the appellate court level.

Texas Farm Bureau v. TCEQ

TFB filed suit against TCEQ in December 2012 to stop implementation of new drought rules that exempt municipalities and power generators from curtailments during water priority calls. A Travis County district court heard the case in June 2013 and ruled in TFB's favor. The court found the new TCEQ rules violated the Water Code priority doctrine and took away vested property rights without compensation. The case was appealed to the Corpus Christi Court of Appeals, and on April 2, 2015, the court sided with TFB and affirmed the trial court ruling.

GBRA v. San Antonio Water System

This case is about the ownership and control of reuse waste water. San Antonio Water System (SAWS) filed for a bed and banks permit to continue to own their waste water after it is dumped into the Guadalupe River all the way to the Texas coast. This is a statewide issue because agriculture irrigators rely on stream water to irrigate and could be harmed by entities being granted super priority of surface water. TFB filed an *amicus brief* in Guadalupe Blanco River Authority's (GBRA) challenge to this permit request. The case was dismissed from a Travis County district court and the ruling was affirmed by the Austin Court of Appeals. GBRA is appealing to the Texas Supreme Court. However TCEQ's response to the permit request is they do not have the authority to issue a permit. TCEQ cannot grant a permit for instream flows or environmental needs and SAWS does not plan to divert the water.

Eminent Domain Cases:

Bragg v. Edwards Aquifer Authority

This case involves the loss of water rights through regulation by an underground water district. The key legal questions are how to value that loss, whether the loss was a physical taking because it involved an endangered species, and whether the loss should be paid for by the water district or the state. TFB filed a brief in the San Antonio Court of Appeals addressing these issues. The appeals court concluded there was a taking and remanded the case to the trial court for valuation. The case was appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, and on May 1, 2015, the Court denied the appeal leaving the Court of Appeals' decision final on the following: a taking of the Braggs' property occurred, the EAA rather than the State of Texas is liable for the taking, and the method for valuing the taking is the "parcel as a whole" test.

Regulatory Cases:

LULAC v. EAA

The League of United Latin American Citizens and the San Antonio Water Supply District sued the Edwards Aquifer Association (EAA) claiming the Voting Rights Act is being violated by underrepresentation of minorities on the EAA Board. TFB filed an *amicus brief* to the federal district court in San Antonio in April 2014, in support of the EAA's motion for summary judgment. TFB argued in its brief that the EAA is a special purpose governmental entity and the one-person, one-vote requirement of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause does not apply. Oral argument was heard in June 2014.

Endangered Species Act Cases:

The Aransas Project v. Shaw

The Aransas Project ("TAP") sued TCEQ for failure to adequately regulate in-stream flows resulting in a "take" of Whooping Cranes under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). TFB's concern was this could result in Federal control of surface water in Texas and participated throughout the case by filing *amicus briefs* in support of the defendants. The federal district court ruled against TCEQ and that ruling was appealed to the Fifth Circuit. TFB along with AFBF, Oklahoma, Oregon, Wyoming, California, Mississippi, and Louisiana filed an *amicus brief* arguing the merits of causation and "junk science." The Fifth Circuit ruled in June 2014 and completely overturned the federal district court ruling and further said the lower court judge abused her judicial discretion. On June 22, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court denied TAP's appeal which means TCEQ can continue issuing water use permits in the Guadalupe and San Antonio River Basins.

The Pacific Legal Foundation – Endangered Species Downlisting

TFB, along with Arizona rancher Jim Chilton, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau and New Mexico Federal Lands Council joined with the Pacific Legal Foundation and filed to downlist five species on the endangered species list. The petition proposed delisting Gypsum Wild-Buckwheat (New Mexico) and downlisting the Black-Capped Vireo (Texas), Kuenzler Hedgehog Cactus (New Mexico), Lesser Long-Nosed Bat (Arizona and New Mexico) and Tobusch Fishhook Cactus (Texas) from endangered to threatened. TFB worked with PLF and filed in New Mexico Federal District Court to compel United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to downlist these species. USFWS responded by publishing an initial positive finding on downlisting September 2013. The USFWS was supposed to issue a final finding by September 2014. TFB and the other groups have filed suit against USFWS because the final determination has not been made.

Defenders of Wildlife v. Jewel (Lesser Prairie-Chicken)

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken (located in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico) was listed under the Endangered Species Act as a “threatened” species in March 2014. Along with the listing USFWS included a 4(d) exemption that allows the continuation of most of agriculture activities. Several suits have been filed and one particular suit brought by environmental groups challenges the listing as not going far enough. They think the listing should be at the most stringent level of “endangered” and they also believe the 4(d) exemption for agriculture should not be allowed. TFB, along with Kansas Farm Bureau, New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, Colorado Farm Bureau and AFBF intervened in that suit that is in Oklahoma federal district court to oppose the challenge to agriculture exemptions. A separate suit in Midland federal district court has invalidated the listing.

Property Rights Cases:

The City of Lubbock v. Coyote Lake Ranch

The City of Lubbock owns the groundwater rights to the Coyote Lake Ranch property and plans to develop a well field. The landowner sued the city arguing that the Accommodation Doctrine, the duty to reasonably accommodate existing surface uses whenever possible, should apply to groundwater severed estates. TFB filed an *amicus brief* in support of the Accommodation Doctrine being applied in the same manner in groundwater development as it is applied in mineral cases.

Jefferson v. Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

This case involves the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, a state agency, prosecuting a veterinarian for actions taken under the “owner exemption” that prohibits the Board from regulating those actions. This exemption also is used in agriculture by producers for the care of farm animals. TFB filed an *amicus brief* to the Austin Court of Appeals arguing for the right of agriculture owners to manage the care and treatment of their animals free of state regulation under the Veterinary Licensing Act.

Regulatory

Continued an aggressive lobby program to influence state and federal agencies as they implemented their statutorily mandated programs, and took opportunities to assist on emerging issues.

Water:

- Developed and coordinated efforts to get members engaged in opposing the WOTUS Rule through VoterVoice, press releases, social media and public events.
- Communicated and coordinated with irrigators in the Brazos River Basin regarding the creation of TCEQ’s Watermaster Program.
- Coordinated with stakeholders in the Lower Colorado River Basin on issues related to LCRA’s Water Management Plan.
- Continued to serve on the Water Conservation Advisory Council and chair the Agricultural Subcommittee.

Endangered Species:

- Continued to lobby U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior and NRCS staff for an increase of agriculture’s interest of marketable credits for Lesser Prairie-Chicken.
- Worked with other state Farm Bureaus, state and national governmental agencies, and conservation organizations to develop, promote, and implement the Recovery Credit System, thus helping landowners with endangered species habitat to receive payments for term contracts for conservation practices.

- Worked with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to grant funds for mitigation of Monarch butterfly habitat.
- Participated in the NRCS State Technical Advisory Subcommittee on Wildlife to develop mitigation income to landowners providing conservation for endangered or threaten species.

Risk Management/Profitability:

- Began to work with membership and grain producer organizations to develop and coordinate an educational effort for the Texas Grain Producers Indemnity Fund.
- Served on the USDA-NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee; therefore, gaining the opportunity to help direct implementation of conservation title programs in a manner that can increase producer profitability through adoption of programs that fit their operations.
- Met with recently appointed RMA Regional Director Francie Tolle regarding changes to the final planting date for grain sorghum in South Texas.

Crop Protection: Coordinated with the Honey Bee advisor to facilitate the development of a voluntary Managed Pollinator Protection Plan for Texas that is intended to reduce the potential restriction by EPA on the use of crop protection products.

Animal Health:

- Met with USDA and Mexican officials, along with other industry representatives to deliver concerns and requested action on traceability of Mexican feeder cattle entering the U.S. These meetings have been influential in holding the two governmental agencies accountable for progress on disease prevalence and eradication efforts. Staff particularly argued the value of keeping the “M” firebrand on all imported live cattle from Mexico and the need for enhanced control of Tuberculosis in Mexico.
- Staff has worked diligently with the Texas Animal Health Commodity and mission to communicate disease control and eradication efforts for Cattle Fever Ticks, Tuberculosis and other diseases in Texas.

Commodities and Regulatory Miscellaneous:

The Commodity and Regulatory staff, along with the Arkansas Farm Bureau Commodity staff, planned and executed a **national commodity conference** that was held on July 13–15, 2015 in Grapevine. 18 state Farm Bureaus, the American Farm Bureau, state agencies, industry and universities participated in the inaugural meeting. 113 people participated.

Maintained memberships and have been active in the **U.S. Grains Council** and the **U.S. Meat Export Federation**.

Worked with counties that may be affected by **High Speed Rail** to facilitate meetings with train officials and to develop a policy position regarding High Speed Rail in the region.

Submitted comments as follows on issues of key interest to TFB members:

- To EPA supporting the approval of new pesticides that give farmers another tool to help fight herbicide resistant weeds.
- To EPA opposing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) regulations.
- To EPA opposing 24-hour Ozone Standards.

- To USDA-APHIS in support of deregulation of biotechnology traits that will enable farmers to fight glyphosate resistant weeds.
- To USDA-APHIS requesting additional funding to fight invasive weeds.
- To RMA supporting the change of the final planting date for sorghum in South Texas.
- To TDA regarding the classification of new pesticides being approved.
- To NRCS regarding TFB's priorities for farm bill conservation programs.
- To TGPIB supporting the program and the change of rules.
- To TPWD supporting the emergency rules that addresses the CWD outbreak in white-tail deer.

State Chemist: Continued to work with the State Chemist office by encouraging elevators to adopt the aflatoxin one sample strategy program and to continue improving the procedures and accuracy of the testing kits.

State Comptroller: Served on the State Comptroller's Business Tax Advisory Group to look at tax policies of the state and how they are collected by the state.

Worked with the Comptroller's State Sales Tax staff on the renewal process of farm and ranch sales tax exemption certificates that expire Dec. 31, 2015.

TXDOT: Served on the Texas Department of Transportation's (TXDOT) Texas Freight Advisory Committee, which was the first comprehensive multimodal transportation plan that focused on the state's freight transportation needs.

Currently serving on a transportation committee coordinated by the University of Texas, Arlington Engineering Department to explore underground transportation to help relieve future congestion.

Crop Insurance: Worked with South Texas producers and RMA in addressing crop insurance planting date changes.

POLITICAL ACTION

State Legislative Accomplishments

TFB accomplished all legislative priority issues established by the TFB Board of Directors for the 84th Legislature, including the following legislation which:

- Expanded the agricultural sales tax exemption to include **GPS data services** used in farming and ranching practices. This legislation is expected to save farmers and ranchers an estimated \$35 million in the 2016-17 fiscal year.
- Protected landowners' groundwater rights by recognizing landowners' **common law rights to groundwater**, providing an appeal of the "reasonableness" of Desired Future Conditions of the Aquifer adopted by local districts, guaranteeing long-term groundwater production permits and creating a streamlined permitting process for aquifer storage and recovery projects. And, successfully opposed several bills that would have been a taking of landowners' groundwater rights.
- Created a **public data base** to identify entities with eminent domain authority, giving property owners another tool to protect their rights under eminent domain law.

- Assisted passage of a constitutional amendment that closes the gap for **transportation funding** without raising taxes, and is expected to put an additional \$3 billion annually into the state's transportation fund by 2020. The proposition passed with 83 percent of the vote.

In addition to the legislative priorities outlined by the TFB Board, TFB was successful in the passage of key legislation that:

- Expands the state's agricultural lien statute and amends the **grain indemnity fund** to provide more financial protection to agricultural producers from grain warehouse failures.
- Provides greater protection for landowners who are involved in **agritourism** activities.
- Clarified the laws related to the **storage of ammonium nitrate** passed. This legislation protects public safety while keeping regulations manageable and ammonium nitrate affordable and accessible for agricultural producers.
- Assisted passage of a constitutional amendment to recognize the **right to hunt and fish**.

National Legislative Accomplishments

Trade: TFB was actively involved in promoting passage of Trade Promotion Authority (the so-called "fast track") that allows for relatively swift consideration of multilateral trade deals by the Congress once those deals are negotiated by the executive branch. TPA allows the Congress to make their preferences for what should be included in trade agreements known to the Administration up front. 26 of the 36 Texas members of the U.S. House voted for TPA. Passage of this provision allows for the consideration of new trade deals, most notably the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

An unforeseen trade issue that arose during the year was mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) for beef and pork. The U.S. lost for the fourth time in the WTO dispute settlement process defending COOL. The House quickly passed a measure that would repeal mandatory COOL and would save the U.S. from an impending billions-of-dollars tariff retaliation from Canada and Mexico. TFB communicated to the Texas Congressional delegation requesting they protect agricultural trade from retaliation by these nations. 34 of 36 Texans voted to repeal mandatory COOL, a resounding level of support.

Taxes: The U.S. House passed legislation making permanent Section 179 expensing, a tax provision that benefits farmers and ranchers when making equipment investments. While the Senate has not yet taken up this bill, it is expected that it (and other tax exemptions important to agriculture) will be taken up in an end-of-the-year extender package.

Regulatory Encroachment: Both the U.S. House and Senate passed measures to roll back the Administration's Waters of the United States rule that would give the federal government control over the vast majority of acres in farm and ranch states. While those bills would face a certain veto from the president, there was broad bipartisan support from the Texas Delegation of the U.S. House (only 6 of 36 Members voted no).

Use of Agricultural Technology: Some states have passed laws to label foods containing genetically-engineered ingredients. Farm Bureau supports federal legislation to preempt this state-by-state authority and place the responsibility for determining the safety of those foodstuffs in the USDA and U.S. Food and Drug Administration. 32 of 36 House members from Texas voted for the Farm Bureau-endorsed bill. Hopes remain high the Senate will take this issue up before year-end, giving farmers and ranchers a key win in their efforts to use technology to increase food.

Farm Policy: Worked with Congressman Mike Conaway, chairman of U.S. House Agriculture Committee, during budget negotiations to obtain agreement to avoid deep cuts to further damage the federal crop insurance program. Also worked to urge the USDA secretary to implement a program for cottonseed within the current Farm Bill.

BLM/Red River Issue: U.S. House Interim Committee passed legislation introduced by Congressman Mac Thornberry to provide relief for Texas landowners along the Red River border.

(See also "Grassroots" for National Affairs Trip to Washington, D.C. and District Congressional Meetings)

Political Programs and Activities

TFB leaders and staff assisted three former county Farm Bureau leaders establish themselves as key Texas House leaders (Kyle Kacal, Brazos CFB; Andy Murr, Kimble CFB; and DeWayne Burns, Johnson CFB).

Assisted other first-time Texas House members with strong Farm Bureau support and connections establish solid reputations and relationships (including Brooks Landgraf of Odessa, John Wray of Waxahachie, Will Metcalf of Conroe, John Cyrier of Lockhart and Gary VanDeaver of New Boston).

16 individuals (including 8 CFB leaders) attended the 2015 Campaign Management School program conducted in September in Waco to improve their prospects in seeking election to local office. This is a key step in having prospective candidates available as open seats to the Texas Legislature occur. For the first time, TFB staff conducted the seminar, rather than AFBF staff.

TFB staff also facilitated the Campaign Management School for Arkansas Farm Bureau in October. 19 individuals attended, seeking local and state legislative seats. Other states are seeking input from TFB in developing their own programs, including Pennsylvania Farm Bureau staff observing the Texas school.

A CFB leader who attended the 2013 Campaign Seminar is seeking an open Texas House seat.

TFB supported Propositions 1, 6 and 7 (which all passed in the November Constitutional Election) providing for additional homestead property tax exemption, protection for traditional rights to hunt and fish and additional revenue for infrastructure needs. 7,500 push-cards were distributed at CFB conventions, and approximately 225,000 emails were sent to TFB member families.

TFB Friends of Agriculture Fund (AGFUND), Inc.

The AGFUND Cabinet continues to be a successful addition to fundraising for the PAC—raising almost \$120,000 this year. Total Cabinet contributions (since 2009 inception) are over \$640,000. AGFUND ended the membership year with approximately \$1,350,000.

Efforts to include the \$2 AGFUND membership contribution on credit card payments are progressing, with indications this will be re-established this membership year.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION

New County Farm Bureau Presidents Orientation

Hosted 27 new county Farm Bureau presidents for orientation in Waco.

County Farm Bureau Board Training

Hosted 367 board members from 62 CFBs for training sessions.

AgLead and FarmLead

The 11-member AgLead XII class successfully completed its 2015 curriculum with sessions in Austin with FarmLead V (April), California (July), Rio Grande Valley (October) and Lubbock (November).

AgLead XII is supported in part by John Deere through an established agreement.

The 13-member FarmLead V class successfully completed its 2015 curriculum with sessions in Austin with AgLead XII (April) and Chicago/Midwest (September).

LeaderLink

There are currently 175 counties participating.

Master Marketer Program

Contributed \$10,000 to Texas A&M's Master Marketer Program designed for agriculture producers to enhance their marketing skills.

Commodity Advisory Committees and Issues Committees

Held meetings for 25 advisory committees during the 2015 TFB Leadership Conference in Austin and the 2015 Summer Commodity Conference in San Marcos.

Conferences

Conducted 4 statewide meetings for Farm Bureau leaders with covered topics as follows:

TFB Leadership Conference:

- County Presidents Luncheon and update
- Yearly Livestock Outlook
- Row Crop Outlook
- Weather Outlook
- Farm Bill Update
- Federal and State Tax Overview
- Eminent Domain/Private Property Rights discussion
- Water
- Transportation Funding
- Political Activism
- Capitol visits with legislators and staff

YF&R Leadership Conference:

- Emerging and Niche Markets
- Market Update
- Legislative Update
- Tour of Whole Foods

Summer Commodity Conference:

- Demographic Characteristics and Trends
- Addressing State Transportation Needs
- Texas/California similarities/differences
- TFB Radio Network Show Live (water, property rights, grain indemnity, ammonium nitrate regulation, member involvement)
- Glenn Hegar – Comptroller of Public Accounts

County Farm Bureau Presidents' Conference (three sessions repeated):

- Promoting Your County Farm Bureau
- County Farm Bureaus as Employers
- Members Matter

Global Agriculture Education Program

Conducted board tour of agriculture and commodity interests in Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington, and Idaho)

Other Meetings

TFB Leadership Conference – 390 CFB leaders from 128 counties attended the conference held in Austin.

Statewide CFB Presidents' Conference and Summer Commodity Conference - 105 CFB presidents, 3 CFB vice presidents, and 273 other CFB leaders from 132 counties attended these conferences held in San Marcos.

YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Conducted 15 district meetings to promote YF&R contests and activities across the state.

Conducted fundraising activities and scholarship programs that awarded \$19,000 to college students.

Young Farmer & Rancher Programs

Conducted the Outstanding Young Farmer & Rancher Contest (23 applicants); the Excellence in Agriculture Contest (13 applicants); and the Discussion Meet Contest (14 applicants).

2014 state winners competed at the 2015 AFBF annual meeting in San Diego, CA.

Conducted a Collegiate Discussion Meet Contest, with 17 participants from 6 colleges and universities.

Conducted a YF&R Leadership Conference in Austin with 67 in attendance.

Conducted the YF&R Fall Tour in Amarillo (80 attendees).

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

S.M. True Jr. Agricultural Scholar Award

Awarded first scholarship valued at \$20,000.

52nd Annual Youth Leadership Conference

Conference held at Tarleton State University with 295 students attending from 132 counties.

19 junior counselors were selected from 44 applicants. 27 TFB staff members chaperoned.

Youth Organizations

Exhibited TFB youth programs and scholarships booth at the Texas 4-H Roundup in College Station, where approximately 4,000 4-H members attended, and at the Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth, where approximately 11,000 FFA members attended.

Supported 4-H in Texas as a major sponsor of the Texas 4-H Livestock Ambassador program.

Hosted FFA chapters to the state office for contest training and preparation.

Hosted FFA Ford Scholars for a tour and briefing of the Texas Farm Bureau headquarters.

Supported FFA in Texas as a Four-Star Corporate Sponsor.

Youth Contests and Scholarship Programs

TOTAL OF \$117,100 STATE-LEVEL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED + \$3,500 IN CASH AWARDS

Completed a District Scholarship Program in all 13 TFB districts. 38 scholarships valued at \$1,000 and 13 memorial scholarships were awarded from 169 applications received.

Free Enterprise Speech Contest awarded 13 state contestants \$27,500 in scholarships. 35 young people entered the Free Enterprise Speech Contest across the state.

Dick Mitchell Scholarship awarded in the amount of \$1,000. (86 applicants)

Presented two \$4,000 scholarships to members of Texas 4-H.

Presented \$4,000 scholarship to retiring state president of Texas FFA.

Presented \$4,000 scholarship to member of the Texas FCCLA.

YF&R Committee sponsored and awarded thirteen \$1,000 scholarships for high school students. (153 applicants)

YF&R Committee sponsored and awarded three \$2,000 scholarships for enrolled college students. (32 applicants)

YF&R Committee sponsored the Collegiate Discussion Meet and presented \$1,500 cash award to winner; \$500 to 3 finalists; and \$500 to the winner's university. (17 entrants)

Hosted 10 of 13 District Free Enterprise Speech Contest winners to Washington, DC.

Youth Hunting Programs

Participated in the annual Youth Wildlife Camp (sponsored by the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society) by working with CFBs to provide students our legendary fajita cookout.

Made a \$2,500 contribution to the Texas Youth Hunting Program.

GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES

Legislative Affairs

National Affairs Awards Trip: Conducted the 35th annual National Affairs Awards Trip to Washington, D.C. More than 150 CFB leaders participated in the three-day program—many of them visiting the Capitol for their first time—and met with their own U.S. representative and visited with staff of urban members, building bridges to all members of the Texas delegation. In a first-time event, Texas Farm Bureau leaders met with leaders from the Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota Farm Bureaus and heard from Senators John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Marco Rubio and House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway.

District Congressional Meetings: Conducted meetings during the August recess with the following members of the Texas delegation: Brian Babin, Joe Barton, John Carter, Mike Conaway, Henry Cuellar, Blake Farenthold, Bill Flores, Louie Gohmert, Jeb Hensarling, Will Hurd, Randy Neugebauer, Pete Olson, John Ratcliffe, Roger Williams (two meetings), Sam Johnson, Mac Thornberry and Randy Weber. These meetings provided an opportunity for CFB leaders from a large portion of the state to meet with their member of Congress and discuss issues of importance to farmers and ranchers.

Policy Development

1,021 voting delegates from 152 counties registered for the 81st Annual Convention held in Corpus Christi, Texas, with a total attendance of 1,181.

Held 13 District Policy Development Meetings around the state prior to CFB conventions to encourage county participation in the policy development process. Approximately 850 county leaders attended.

COUNTY FARM BUREAU PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Ag Days

Held 93 Ag Days with CFB leaders' involvement.

CFB Board Functions

Field Operations staff attended 1,513 CFB Board Meetings

Field Operations staff assisted with 200 CFB Budget Preparations

County Farm Bureau Office Secretaries Appreciation and Information Functions

461 secretaries from 182 counties attended functions held in each district.

County Farm Bureau Office Secretaries Conference

246 secretaries from 136 counties attended the statewide conference held in the TFB Conference and Training Center in Waco.

Membership Mailing Service

Provided savings of over \$450,000 to county Farm Bureaus for membership mailing activities.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

Discount Programs for Members

Since the program's inception in the fall of 2011, more than 32,000 members have taken advantage of the \$500 discount on **GM** vehicles. This program has collectively saved Texas Farm Bureau members more than \$16 million on new vehicle purchases.

An agreement with **Sprint** has been signed that will provide a 15% discount on monthly recurring charges on eligible new and existing accounts.

An agreement has been signed with **VeriFID** to provide credit monitoring and restoration services to members for a nominal yearly fee of \$45 for an individual/ \$70 for a family plan.

Membership Appreciation Calling Program

48,814 were calls placed to randomly-selected members

Spoke with 13,713 members

Left 17,439 messages

American Farm Bureau Federation Awards

TFB received the following AFBF Awards of Excellence and will be recognized during the 2016 AFBF annual meeting.

- Education & Outreach
- Leadership Development
- Member Services
- Membership Initiatives
- Policy Development & Implementation
- Public Relations & Communications

Building

Texas Farm Bureau Building Corporation purchased the future home of the TFB Legislative Office in Austin at 600 W. 12th Street. Remodel completion and estimated move-in date is March 2016.

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