



TFB's Mission—Texas Farm Bureau's mission is to be the Voice of Texas Agriculture.

TFB's Vision—The vision of Texas Farm Bureau is to benefit all Texans through promotion of a prosperous agriculture for a viable, long-term domestic source of food, fiber and fuel.



2026 TEXAS FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER

SPRING CONFERENCE

April 17-19 | Waco

2026 YF&R SPRING CONFERENCE

APRIL 17-19, 2026 • TFB Conference and Training Center

7410 Fish Pond Rd., Waco, TX

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

All Collegiate Discussion Meet activities will be held at the TFB Conference and Training Center.

Collegiate Discussion Meet

- 7:00 a.m. Collegiate Discussion Meet Contestant Check-in / Judges' Orientation
- 7:30 a.m. Collegiate Discussion Meet Begins

YF&R Spring Conference

- 9:00 a.m. **Registration**
- 10:00 a.m. **Welcome**
- 10:10 a.m. **Drone Presentation / Demonstration**
Justin Hale, Owner & Director of Operations, Ignition Land Services
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. **Lunch/Announce Elite 8 Discussion Meet Contestants**
- 1:00-2:15 p.m. **Policy Panel**
- 2:30-3:40 p.m. **Breakout Sessions**
 - Breakout #1**
Your Texas Farm Bureau County Policy
Mason Parish, Montgomery County Farm Bureau Vice President
 - Breakout #2**
Texas Department of Agriculture Grant Workshop
Kat Neilson, Lead Grant Specialist, Texas Department of Agriculture
 - Breakout #3**
Hedging and Marketing Commodities
Donna Hughes, Senior Risk Management Consultant, StoneX Financial Markets
- 3:50-5:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions, **Segment Two**
(Breakout sessions same as above)
- 5 p.m.-5:15 p.m. **Wrap up and CDM Final 4 Announcements**
- 5:15 p.m. **Dinner on Your Own**
- 5:30-6:30 p.m. **Family-Friendly Social Hour at Cameron Park Zoo**

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

- 6:30 a.m. **Breakfast at Hotel**
- 8:00 a.m. **Opening Remarks and Announcements**
- 8:30-9:45 a.m. **Estate Planning**
Shannon Ferrell, Professor, Oklahoma State University
- 10:00-11:45 a.m. **BBQ Workshop**
Kyle Caldwell, Vice President of Marketing and Operations, Geneplus
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. **BBQ Lunch**
- 1:00-1:30 p.m. **Collegiate Discussion Meet – Final Four**
- 1:30 p.m. **Break**
- 1:45 p.m. **Financial Literacy**
Dr. Lyndi Sanders, Customer Education Officer, Capital Farm Credit
- 3:00 p.m. **CEU Opportunity with Chase Brooke / Tour of TFB Conference Center & Board Room**
- 4:00 p.m. **YF&R Contest Q&A Session**
- 5:15 p.m. **Adjourn**
- 6:00 p.m. **Dinner at Hotel / Collegiate Discussion Meet Awards**
- 6:45-7:00 p.m. **DJ Bingo with K. C. Jones**

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

- 7:00 a.m. Devotional and Breakfast at Hilton Garden Inn
Conference Conclusion – Safe Travels Home

2026 YF&R ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ryan Yeatts (chair)
Montague County

Zachary Mengers (vice chair)
Montague County

Zack Altman
Hall County

Matthew Boerner
Cooke County

John (Gus) Bluntzer
Nueces County

Haley Clampit
Gonzales County

Alexis Hargrove
Bosque County

Kade Hodges
Coke-Sterling County

McCrae McCormick
Floyd County

Madisson Morgan
Brazoria-Galveston County

Kaleb Nowlin
Comanche County

Athlyn Roberts
Coleman County

Sarah Roderick
El Paso County

Jessi Schur
Hale County

Weston (Ross) Vinson
Taylor County

GUEST SPEAKERS



Dr. Lyndi Sanders, Ed.D.
Customer Education Officer, Capital Farm Credit

Dr. Lyndi Sanders holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Agricultural Development from Texas A&M University, as well as a Doctorate in Education from Baylor University. With over 17 years of experience in agricultural lending—spanning both the Farm Credit System and commercial banking—she brings deep industry insight to her work. Her research centers on advancing financial literacy among young and beginning farmers and ranchers, aiming to equip the next generation of agricultural producers with essential financial tools. Lyndi lives in Cameron, Texas, with her two sons, Sloan and Dean.



Justin Hale
Director of Operations, Ignition Land Services

Justin Hale is a Texas-based land management professional and entrepreneur with over a decade of experience in vegetation management, agricultural aviation support, and applied ag technology. He is the owner and Director of Operations at Ignition Land Services, where he helps landowners, producers, and agencies solve complex vegetation challenges through ground, aerial, and UAV based applications.



Kyle Caldwell
Vice President of Marketing and Operations, Geneplus

Kyle Caldwell grew up on his family's cattle operation and has a longstanding background in production agriculture. Kyle currently serves as the Vice President of Marketing and Operations for Geneplus, one of the leading suppliers of Brangus and Ultrablack genetics in the United States, marketing over 350 bulls annually across North America. Previously, Kyle has held roles in branded beef and meat packing with Certified Hereford Beef, Bettcher Industries, Raider Red Meats, and Heartbrand Beef. Kyle received his bachelor's degree in Animal Science from Texas Tech and his master's degree in Meat Science at Texas A&M. While at both universities, Kyle was extremely involved in the BBQ world, gaining certifications and accolades in his tenure. Kyle, his wife Jennifer, and their son live outside of Corsicana.



Donna Hughes
Senior Risk Management Consultant, StoneX Financial Markets

Donna Hughes is a Senior Risk Management Consultant with StoneX Financial Markets. She began her career in 1978 at the CME Group in Chicago where she worked with USDA to facilitate the inspection of physical commodities deliverable on the Exchange. Her work at the CME introduced her to multiple CME Clearing Firms, and from there she chose to work with George Segal who was the primary sole hedger of pork bellies in the industry. Donna relocated to Texas in 2005 with her family where she began working with local producers to hedge risk for cattle, grains and cotton. She is the author of the Market Talk Newsletter and Podcast.



Kat Neilson
Head Grant Specialist, Texas Department of Agriculture

Kat Neilson joined the Texas Department of Agriculture's grants team in 2018. She is the Texas state point of contact for the Specialty Crop Block Grant and Specialty Crop Multi-State program, the Young Farmer Grant, the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, the STAR Fund, the Agriculture and Research Development Program and the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program. Her fifteen years of grant experience stems from a diverse background in non-profits, including higher education, private foundations, and heritage/museum management. Her experience includes the entire life cycle of grants from writing and project implementation to monitoring and new program creation. Kat loves to travel and spends her time in the great outdoors camping, hiking, and exploring with her partner, Randy.



Shannon L. Ferrell
Professor, Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Economics

Shannon Ferrell is a professor in the Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Economics, where he specializes in Agricultural Law. He grew up on a cattle and wheat operation in Western Oklahoma, and obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in Agricultural Economics from OSU before obtaining his Juris Doctorate from the Oklahoma City University School of Law with endorsements in Estate Planning and Business and Financial Services Law. Shannon spent a number of years in full-time private practice before joining OSU in 2007.