



# TACC NEWSLETTER

## Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council

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### Officers

President

**Greg O'Brian**

Friona Wheat Growers  
Friona, Texas

Vice President

**Aaron Hendricks**

Floydada Co-op Gins  
Floydada, Texas

Secretary

**Eric Wanjura**

Farmers Cooperative Compress  
Lubbock, Texas

Immediate Past President

**April Graves**

United Agricultural Cooperative, Inc.  
El Campo, Texas

### Staff

**Tommy Engelke**

Executive Vice President

**Christy Lewis**

Vice President,  
Administration and  
Member Services



## SAVE THE DATE: TACC'S COOPERATIVE MANAGERS CONFERENCE IN A NEW LOCATION!

Save the date for **TACC's Cooperative Managers Conference, July 12-14, at the Choctaw Casino and Resort in Durant, Oklahoma!**

The program, recommended by a panel of industry leaders, is rapidly taking shape and will cover topics such as co-op board governance, legislative and industry updates, labor solutions, and much more!

**Choctaw Casino and Resort offers exceptional features and amenities guaranteed to "wow" both you and your family!** Enjoy over 36 restaurants and bars, bowling, an arcade, virtual reality gaming, a movie theater and Tailgater's Sports Bar. Outside, the Oasis boasts four tropical pools, two swim-up bars and private cabanas and the Aqua, a three-acre pool area, has a separate pool for adults, one for kids and 50 poolside cabanas.

Stay tuned for more information!

## 2023 TACC INTERNSHIP SELECTION UNDERWAY!

Fifteen years ago, the TACC Board of Directors issued a declaration that our industry needs to do its part to attract top talent and thus the Summer Co-op Internship Program was borne. After visiting several classes at six ag universities in the Fall and Spring, TACC staff along with several co-op general managers, past TACC interns that are now co-op employees, and university faculty members, interviewed several qualified students. Final deliberations are being made and selections will be announced soon. **If your co-op is interested in hosting a TACC intern - it is not too late to reach out to Christy Lewis at [christy@texas.coop](mailto:christy@texas.coop).**

## DON'T MISS TACC'S ONLY FULL WORKING BOARD MEETING!

TACC will conduct a working board meeting beginning at **1:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 10 through 10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 11, 2023** at the **Embassy Suites Hotel** (512-308-3882), 270 Bass Pro Drive, **Round Rock, Texas** 78665. We intentionally chose a hotel near TACC's new offices so you can stop by and check out our new location!

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

### Wednesday, May 10, 2023

8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	New TACC Director Orientation <i>(for new TACC Board members)</i>
10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	TACC Executive Committee Meeting
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.	TACC Division Meetings
3:15 p.m.-5:15 p.m.	TACC Committee Meeting

### Thursday, May 11, 2023

8:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	TACC Full Board of Directors Meeting
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### Some of the highlights of the meeting, to include:

- It will be the first working board meeting of the new administration.
- The 2023 State Legislative Session will still be occurring.
- Get a sneak peek at the Kalahari Resorts in Round Rock – the location of TACC's 2024 Joint Cooperative Meeting, March 17-19.

## TACC PARTNERS WITH LAND O'LAKES AND TAD ON CO-OP LEGISLATIVE DINNER!

Every two years, to coincide with a State Legislative Session, TACC is consumed at the State Capitol with several high – profile political projects that benefit the entire co-op industry. One of these is the **TACC Land O'Lakes / Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD) Co-op Legislative Dinner**.

For the 6th time, TACC teamed with Land O'Lakes and TAD (**made up of three regional dairy co-ops**) to conduct a "Co-op Legislative Dinner" near the State Capitol at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. We had 50 in attendance, of that amount, 17 were key lawmakers in state government. Many were first time participants to the light-hearted affair and it was a another dinner enjoyed by all!



## NINE-MEMBER BRYAN CO-OP BOARD HOLDS MEETING AT STATE CAPITOL --- DONE SO EVERY TWO YEARS SINCE 1999

Producers Cooperative Association CEO **James Deatherage**, a TACC Past President, and his **nine-member board of directors**, secluded a conference room in the basement of the State Capitol once again --- this time on April 19 --- and spent the entire day hosting, filming, and having a fireside chat with nine members of the Texas legislature. The group has been doing this project every two years to coincide with the State Legislative Session. Some directors get up as early as 3:30 a.m., they all load up in a van at the co-op parking lot in Bryan, then travel over for the day to interview key rural legislators and at the same time learn about how state government works.

As TACCs **Tommy Engelke** says, “This may be a key step for those leaders to get to know how state government works, but the rewards it gives the entire Texas co-op community during this day-long fireside chat, is immense! We don't just tap the surface of key issues and co-op understanding, with this project. It's a more true understanding of how the co-op business model has such an impact on the economic landscape of the state. It's been an awesome ride for more than two decades for both the Bryan co-op and TACC, as well.

This year's slate of 30 – minute interviews and TV taping for their weekly Thursday television show “**From the Ground Up**”, included the following state legislators:

- State Senator **Drew Springer** of Muenster, vice chair of the Senate Administration committee and author of two key ag and rural economic development bills.
- Texas Land Commissioner **Dawn Buckingham** of Lakeway, the first female – elected State Senator from Travis County & the first female Texas Land Commissioner.
- State Representative **Brad Buckley** of Killeen, a veterinarian, chair of the House Public Education Committee and author of the “Fake Meat” bill for agriculture.
- State Representative **Dewayne Burns** of Cleburne, chair of the House Land and Resource Committee (*Private Property Rights Committee*), author of the heavily – pushed Right-to-Farm Act, and last years chair of the House Ag & Livestock Committee.
- State Representative **Mary González** of Clint in the El Paso Valley, grew up showing dairy cattle and vice chair of the powerful House Appropriations, a committee which decides how the state spends its \$306 billion budget.
- State Representative **Kyle Kacal** of College Station, a large rancher, who is a former county Farm Bureau president and is vice chair of the House Corrections Committee & sits on the House Natural Resources Committee, which is where all water bills must pass.
- State Representative **Trent Ashby** of Lufkin, who grew up on an East Texas dairy farm, was a State FFA Vice President, and who now chairs the House Culture, Recreation, & Tourism Committee, which is where all Texas Parks and Wildlife bills must pass.
- State Representative **John Raney** of Bryan, who serves as vice chair on the House Transportation Committee, of which all transportation, traffic & DPS-related bills must pass, and
- Major **Chris Nordloh**, agriculture's state point – person on all ag – related issues regarding federal motor carrier & transportation regulations.

TACC, as always, was asked to arrange for and coordinate their time at the State Capitol.

# TACC RECOGNIZES THE BEST OF THE BEST!

## Cooperator of the Year Award

TACC's 2022 Cooperator of the Year is **Bobby Kurten** with the Producers Cooperative Association in Bryan, Texas. This award is reserved for those that have provided exceptional service and leadership, leaving a lasting impact on their local and statewide cooperative community. Bobby served on the board for Producers Cooperative Association for 41 years, 31 of those were as board chair. During Bobby's tenure as Board Chairman, Producers Cooperative has never faced a losing year – actually, just the opposite – twenty-six of his thirty-one years as chair were record setting! Revenues have grown by over 100 million dollars and assets have increased by 45 million. Growth in membership has been equally impressive – Producers Cooperative continues to be the largest member-owned ag co-op in the state. In the cooperative governance structure, Bobby's accomplishments and qualities deserve to be recognized as one of the best!



## Cooperative Ginner of the Year

The TACC's 2022 Cooperative Ginner of the Year is **Curtis Stewart** of Spade Cooperative, Inc. in Spade. Curtis is a strong cooperative leader in West Texas and very well respected in the ginning industry and in his community. His career in agriculture began when he was a teenager working on the farm of a family friend in Tahoka. Curtis has worked for several agribusinesses throughout his distinguished career including PCCA, Farmers Cooperative Compress, New Home Co-op Gin, Chickasaw Cotton Oil Company, and Dumas Cotton Gin, as well as the USDA South Plains Ginning Lab in Lubbock. He is a leader in both his community and the industry and a strong advocate for cooperative principles!

## Tommy Engelke Distinguished Service Award

TACC's first Tommy Engelke Distinguished Service Award was presented to an industry leader devoted heavily to our kind of work, and this year's winner is **Darren Turley**, Executive Director of the Texas Association of Dairymen in Dublin, Texas. A lifelong involvement with the dairy industry – from growing up on a farm to serving in leadership roles on a number of dairy industry committees – prepared second-generation dairyman Darren Turley to lead the Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD), the advocate and unified voice for the dairy industry in Texas since 1991. He is past chairman of the Texas Agriculture Council and served on the executive committee and is the past legislative committee chairman for TACC. It is with heartfelt thanks that TACC presented this award to Darren for his many contributions to this industry and for his passion for agriculture!



We are currently accepting nominations for each of these awards for 2023! If you interested in nominating anyone for one of these TACC awards, please contact [Christy Lewis](#) at TACC any time **before September 1!**

# TACC WELCOMES NEW DIRECTORS AND HONORS RETIRING DIRECTORS

## New TACC Directors

- Lance Barnett, PYCO Industries, Inc., Lubbock
- Ronnie Bell, Miller-Bowie Supply Company, Texarkana
- Robert Bogle, Farmers Cooperative Society #1, Wellington
- John Chisum, PYCO Industries, Inc., Lubbock
- Tim Conner, PYCO Industries, Inc., Lubbock
- Chance Crossland, PYCO Industries, Inc., Lubbock
- Dr. Steven Klose, Texas A&M University, College Station
- Kelsey Maxwell, Farmers Cooperative Compress, Plainview
- Makenzie Volleman, CoBank, Dublin

## Retiring TACC Directors (*italics denotes Honorary Directors*)

- *Colby Christie, Rule Co-op Gin and Elevator Company, Rule*
- *Buddy Cortese, Farm Credit Bank of Texas, Austin*
- Tyce Foster, Farmers Co-op Elevator Association, Levelland
- *Brad Johnson, Northeast Texas Farmers Cooperative, Sulphur Springs*
- *Kelley Litsch, Triangle Insurance, Lubbock*
- Corey Owens, Angelo State University, San Angelo
- *Dr. Mark Waller, Texas A&M University, College Station*

## 2023 – 2024 Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council Leadership Team

### Officers

President	<b>Greg O'Brian</b> , Friona Wheat Growers, Friona
Vice President	<b>Aaron Hendricks</b> , Floydada Co-op Gins, Floydada
Secretary	<b>Eric Wanjura</b> , Farmers Cooperative Compress, Lubbock
Imm. Past President	<b>April Graves</b> , United Ag, El Campo
Exec. Vice President	<b>Tommy Engelke</b> , Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council, Round Rock

### Cotton Division

Chair	<b>Cary Eubanks</b> , Texas Star Cooperative Gin, Slaton
Vice Chair	<b>Keith Smith</b> , Gulf Compress, Corpus Christi
Secretary	Lance Bradford, Winter Garden Co-op Gin, Batesville
Imm. Past Chair	<b>Guyle Roberson</b> , Texas Producers Cooperative, Amherst

### Allied and Grain Division

Chair	<b>Jason Lee</b> , Planter's Grain Cooperative, Odem
Vice Chair	<b>Suzy Davis</b> , Brownfield Farmers Co-op Station, Brownfield
Secretary	<b>Darren Turley</b> , Texas Association of Dairywomen, Dublin

### Services Division

Chair	<b>Chris Looney, CoBank, Lubbock</b>
Vice Chair	<b>Dr. John Park, Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension Service, College Station</b>
Secretary	Blake Moore, Lamb County Electric Co-op, Littlefield

### Producer Rep.

**Steve Moore**, Central Rolling Plains Co-op, Roscoe

### Budget & Finance

**Corey Smyth**, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, Lubbock

### Legislative & Governmental Affairs Committee

Chair	<b>Seth Stephens</b> , Producers Co-op Elevator, Floydada
Vice Chair	Aaron Peña, Valley Co-op Oil Mill, Harlingen
Secretary	Daniel Luehrs, EdCot Co-op Gin, Odem

### Education & Member Services Committee

Chair	<b>Jeremy Spies</b> , Calcot, Ltd., Corpus Christi
Vice Chair	Dr. Donna McCallister, Texas Tech University, Lubbock
Secretary	Chris Martinez, La Feria Co-op Gin & Supply, La Feria

**\*Bold denotes member of the Executive Committee**

# OUT & ABOUT

## WITH TACC

(Since February 16, 2023)

- Solicited attendees for and conducted the TACC Joint Cooperative Meeting in San Antonio on March 12-14, where over 300 people attended.
- Assisted with the Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives meeting on February 23-24 in San Antonio.
- Attended and participated in several ag commodity group lobby meetings (*Texas Ag Council*) in-person and virtually.
- Continued to update and share TACC's Legislative Bill Summary containing nearly 50 bills impacting rural Texas.
- Along with several other cotton groups, participated in "Cotton Day at the State Capitol" on March 7, where cotton linens were personally delivered to over 200 state legislative offices.
- Finalizing plans for the May 10-11 TACC Board of Directors Meeting in Round Rock.
- Continued to assist co-ops on numerous personnel requests.
- Interviewed several qualified students for TACC's 2023 Summer Co-op Internship Class.
- Prepared countless documents and hosted several Zoom meetings for the TACC Dues Committee.
- Attended the Texas Cotton Ginners' Association Annual Meeting & Gin Show in Lubbock on March 29-30.
- Hosted a planning meeting in Lubbock regarding TACC's Cooperative Managers Conference in July on March 30.
- Hosted the TACC Land O'Lakes/Texas Association of Dairymen Cooperative Legislative Dinner on April 10 with 50 legislators and industry and cooperative leaders in attendance.
- Assisted Producers Cooperative Association of Bryan CEO **James Deatherage** and their board at the State Capitol on April 19, where they interviewed several state legislators for their weekly TV show "From the Ground Up."
- Wrote daily Facebook posts and weekly LinkedIn papers.
- Accommodating a select committee to assist in the TACC management transition.
- Developed an economic footprint placemat for Floydada Co-op Gins for use at their April annual meeting.

### What will we be up to...

- Continuing to write daily Facebook & weekly educational LinkedIn posts.
- Monitoring the state legislative session.
- Hosting the TACC Board of Directors at a meeting in Round Rock on May 10-11.
- Finalizing TACC's 2023 Summer Co-op Internship Class, placing qualified students in co-ops across the state.
- Site visit to the new location of TACC Cooperative Managers Conference, Choctaw Casino and Resort, Durant, OK
- Conducting a TACC management transition.

## CALENDAR

*May*

10-11: **TACC Board Meeting, Round Rock**  
 29: Memorial Day Holiday and last day of the 2023 Legislative Session

*July*

12-14: **TACC Cooperative Managers Conference, Durant, OK**

*June*

11: Texas A&M University Cotton Engineering and Mechanization Chair Advisory Board Meeting, College Station  
 8-9: Plains Cotton Cooperative Assn. Gin Workshop, San Antonio  
 25-27: Texas Cotton Ginners' Association Summer Meeting, Galveston

**FROM OUR**

# facebook

## Quick Facts



On our Facebook posts since mid-February, we have reached nearly **8,000 people**



In the past month, we have received **340 likes** on our daily Facebook posts.

### Most Interaction-Single Post

Sharing a post of **TACC's 2023 Joint Cooperative Meeting** garnered the most attention on our Facebook, reaching over **2,100 people**. Below is the text of the post:

*"TACC would not be who we are without years of great leaders that encourage those around them through leading by example. On Monday at the TACC Joint Cooperative Meeting, we were able to present the 2022 TACC Awards as follows, as well as rename the TACC Distinguished Service Award to honor **Tommy Engelke**: 1st Annual Tommy Engelke Distinguished Service Award-**Darren Turley** (Texas Association Of Dairymen), TACC Cooperative Ginner of the Year-**Curtis Stewart** (Spade Cooperative, Inc.), TACC Cooperator of the Year-**Bobby Kurten** (Producers Cooperative Association-Bryan, TX)"*