



# TAD News

## November 2005

3500 William D. Tate Ave.  
Suite 100  
Grapevine, TX 76051  
(817) 410-4576  
(817) 410-4541 (fax)  
[www.milk4texas.org](http://www.milk4texas.org)

John Cowan  
Executive Director

### 2005 Board of Directors

Gordon McCool, President  
David DeJong, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Pres.  
Scott Opitz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres.  
Greg Mitchell, Secretary  
Steve Vanden Berge, Treasurer  
Frans Beukeboom  
Bryant Fisher  
Harry DeWitt  
Neil Hoff  
Brad Johnson  
Bryan Kammerdiener  
Jerry Spencer  
Pete Schouten  
Lloyd Wolf

## TAD staying busy as 2005 nears its final month

I feel it is important from time to time to stop and reflect on issues TAD is working on, in your behalf.

A board of directors comprised of 13 active dairy producers from across the state and one associate director

representing agribusiness governs TAD. The board's objective is to be an advocate for Texas dairymen on issues facing you, including legislation, environmental regulations and animal health matters. We have a full time lobbyist in Austin who daily calls on key decision makers to keep your business concerns out front, and we have a media specialist assisting us with regular communications.

On the federal level, we are working on the agricultural exemption from CERCLA/EPCRA. At the state level, we are working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on many issues, including CAFO permits, soil testing protocols, TMDLs and bacterial source tracking.

As you know, 2006 is an election year and, faced with a pending Texas Supreme Court ruling on public school finance concerns, we expect to see a significant interest from new political candidates. Candidate filing deadlines approach in late December, and TAD is poised to show support for candidates who support agriculture.

We continue to work with all stakeholders on sustainable environmental technologies and are particularly concerned whether or not composting of dairy manure can continue in some fashion.

I encourage you to contact your directors with concerns or questions. You can access their contact information on our Web site, [www.milk4texas.org](http://www.milk4texas.org).

### Manager's Update

John Cowan

## Dairy, beef producers share steak, ice cream, fellowship

Dairy and beef producers in West Texas and New Mexico share many of the same interests and concerns, but admitted they don't really know each other very well. To change this, about 180 dairymen, beef producers and those who work with them gathered Oct. 8 for a networking social at the Friona dairy farm of Harry DeWitt.

The event was held Oct. 8 at the dairy farm of Harry DeWitt and sponsored by the Underwood Law Firm and McCormick Co., both of Amarillo. Attendees came from Clovis, N.M., to Plainview, and Littlefield to Dalhart.

"Those two companies thought we need to have a meeting every couple of months and talk about issues on both sides of the fence and get acquainted," DeWitt said. "Sooner or later we're going to need each other, whether it's in politics, the environment or other regulations"

Representatives from the beef industry toured DeWitt's farm. The entire group dined on steak, milk and ice cream.

"I think it was a step in the right direction," DeWitt said. "We all live in the same communities; we've got to get along." ■



*TOP: Harry DeWitt shares information about the dairy industry with visitors to his farm; BOTTOM: Underwood attorney Lynn Tate (l) visits with dairymen Cheri and Donald DeJong and Dave Bellows.*

## Capitol Update

By Shayne Woodard

Gov. Rick Perry has named a 24- member, bipartisan Texas Tax Reform Commission to develop proposals to modernize the state tax system and provide long-term property tax relief as well as sound financing for public schools.

The commission will be headed by John Sharp, a Democrat and former Texas comptroller.

The commission plans to hold public hearings across the state. For a complete list of members, visit the Governor's Web site at [www.governor.state.tx.us](http://www.governor.state.tx.us).

### Key Agencies Under Sunset Review

Two state agencies critical to the dairy industry will be going under the review of the Texas Sunset Commission over the next 14 months, the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratories and the Texas Animal Health Commission.

Sunset is the regular assessment by the Legislature of the continuing need for a state agency to exist. While most oversight is concerned with agency compliance with legislative policies, Sunset asks a more basic question: Do the agency's functions continue to be needed? The Sunset process works by setting a date on which an agency will be abolished unless legislation is passed to continue its functions. This creates a unique opportunity for the Legislature to look closely at each agency and make fundamental changes to an agency's mission or operations if needed. ▪

## TAD backs Combs, Staples for office

TAD has announced its endorsement and support of Susan Combs, candidate for Texas Comptroller, and Todd Staples, candidate for Texas Agriculture Commissioner. TAD's executive board based its decision largely on the candidates' performance in their current positions – Combs as Agriculture Commissioner and Staples as a Texas state senator representing East Texas.

Both candidates welcomed TAD's backing. →



Texas Association of Dairymen  
3500 William D. Tate Ave., Suite 100  
Grapevine, TX 76051-8734

## Producers looking for funding to save manure haul out program

With reduced hauling rates for producers participating in the Dairy Manure Export Support Project – and state funding set to end in September 2006 – a group of producers and others have organized to look for new sources of money to continue this highly successful program.

While some dairy farmers will continue to send their manure to composting facilities once the hauling reimbursement runs out, the group believes the program needs to find new funding sources in order to stay viable, said David DeJong.

So far, the group has held only one meeting, and an action plan and member responsibilities are under development. Group members also have been brainstorming different funding ideas, such as possibly using some of the EQUIP money to pay for the program, said Steve Vanden Berge, another dairyman in the group.

The group is expected to examine issues such as the cost of hauling manure to the composting site and the marketing of the composted product, DeJong said.

The program began in 2000 and by the end of 2005 is predicted to have offset the transportation costs associated with the removal of close to 1 million tons of raw manure from the Leon and Bosque watersheds. This roughly correlates to more than 2 million pounds of total phosphorus.

---

“I thank Texas' dairymen not only for their support of my candidacy, but also for their continued dedication to feeding the people of Texas,” Combs said. “I've enjoyed working with dairy producers during my two terms as Agriculture Commissioner, and I will continue to represent their interests as Comptroller.”

Staples said, “Texas dairymen play a vital role in the supply of an essential commodity. Their good work results not only in a fresh supply of a wholesome product, but in thousands of jobs and a real boost to the Texas economy. I am honored to receive the endorsement of the Texas Association of Dairymen. ▪