

'Tis the season – on the farm and on the football field

The football season is well underway, and it is no surprise that the dairy industry is a great partner for sports because of the nutrition advantage that milk has for athletes. In fact, Dairy Max and the Dallas Cowboys have recognized that fact recently, when Dairy Max was named the official nutrition partner of the team.

I cannot help but compare the Texas dairy industry to the professional football players we watch every week. The player is a lot like our high-producing dairy cattle. The average career of the professional football player is 3.5 years – about the average number of years a mature dairy cow is in production on today's dairies. The 1,800 players in the NFL roughly have a 25 percent turnover rate, which is similar to the cull rate on a modern dairy farm.

The comparison of the modern dairy cow to a professional athlete is very easy to see when you consider that each and every day the cow eats more than 50 pounds of dry matter

and produces close to 10 gallons of milk a day for the entire year. That is a feat that should be marveled at as much as any field goal, in my mind.

I am sure you can see the comparisons of a football coach to the job you do every day urging your employees to march toward the

same goal in each of their individual responsibilities on the farm.

The offense is passing its previous production records while the defense is holding strong against disease and health issues on the farm. All the time the farmer is continuously recruiting the next new talent with modern genetics selection and breeding strategies.

Whether it's the Texas dairy industry or the Dallas Cowboys, both are America's team, as far as the Texas Association of Dairymen is concerned.

Keep your spirits up this "season." Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Texas Association of Dairymen! ▪

Director's Update Darren Turley

TAD honored to receive AgriLife award

The Texas Association of Dairymen is one of three organizations selected by Texas A&M Extension Service to receive its Extension Partnership Award. The award will be presented to TAD in January during the Texas A&M AgriLife Conference in College Station.

The award recognizes vital alliances with agencies, organizations and others beyond the Texas A&M University System. It is the agency's highest honor for those partners, in either the private or public sector, whose dedicated collaboration and support have most advanced the Extension Service's mission.

The award is a "tribute to your association's long-time engagement with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service," according to the notification letter from Director Douglas Steele. "The Board, staff and membership of the Texas Association of Dairymen have demonstrated an enduring commitment to Extension education, Extension educators and the people we serve. We deeply appreciate

(Continued, "Award," Page 2)

Legislative session around corner

By Lauren Wied, Shayne Woodard and J Pete Laney
TAD lobbyists

Now that the dust has settled from the November general election, the focus has shifted to the 85th legislative session, which will begin Jan. 10.

Still, we'd like to point out a couple of election results before moving on to discuss proposed legislation. Two incumbent Republicans in "purple" Texas House districts lost their reelection in the general election. There were no surprises in the Texas Senate.

Going into next session, the make-up of the legislative bodies will be 20 Republicans and 11 Democrats in the Senate and 95 Republicans and 55 Democrats in the House.

Shortly after the election, bill pre-filing began Nov. 14.

At press time, 934 House and Senate bills and resolutions have been filed. Topics covered in the pre-filed legislation from current lawmakers and lawmakers-elect range from immigration and education to raw milk.

The beginning of bill filing also triggered the release of Lt. (Continued, "Legislation," Page 2)

Contact TAD:

P.O. Box 13182
Austin, TX 78711
(817) 410-4538

www.milk4texas.org

Facebook: [texasdairy](https://www.facebook.com/texasdairy)

Twitter: [@TxDairymen](https://twitter.com/TxDairymen)

TAD Staff:

Executive Director:
Darren Turley
dturley@milk4texas.org

TAD Board:

Joe Osterkamp, Chairman
Lynn Ramsey, 1st Vice Chair
Rocky Gingg, 2nd Vice Chair
Johan Koke, Secretary
Gary DeVos, Treasurer
Mark Ahlem
Willy DeJong

James Hancock
Joel Hettinga
Tom Hoff
Brent Jennings
Brad Johnson
David Volleman

TAD Board Action

The Texas Association of Dairymen Board of Directors took the following actions at its December meeting in Grapevine:

- Voted to continue the current TAD membership fee structure of 3/4 cent per 100 pounds for 2017.
- Heard a report from Darren Turley that the seat allocation for the 13-member Board will not change for 2017. Board membership is based on the number of individual producer members of each cooperative and the pounds of milk each cooperative's members market in Texas. The Board also includes one associate member. Board seat allocation will remain: Associate member (1); DFA Southwest (5); Select Milk Producers (3); DFA Southeast (2); and Hilmar (2). Board members are designated by their milk cooperatives.
- Heard a presentation from Cary Hunter, milk market administrator based in Dallas for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The board received a thorough explanation of the effect of each type of dairy product on the milk price paid to the dairy producer. Hunter also discussed the new processing plants coming online in Texas and how they will impact milk pricing.
- Heard a presentation from Ethan Boening, a Texas A&M graduate who visited Poland last summer as part of the Texas-Poland Young Farmer Exchange Program. Boening is the son of Russell Boening, president of the Texas Farm Bureau. (More on this in a future edition of the *Dairy Dispatch*).
- Heard that Texas AgriLife Extension will hold a DOPA meeting on April 6 in Stephenville.
- Set dates for the Board's spring meetings in Austin, during the legislative session. The Board will meet in Austin Feb. 21-23 and April 25-27. ▪

2017 TAD calendars on their way

The 2017 Dairy Environmental Calendar, jointly produced by TAD and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will be sent to Texas dairy producers in December.

The calendar is intended to help producers with required record keeping. If you do not receive the calendar and would like one, please contact TAD. ▪

"Award," Continued from Page 1

your organization's support."

TAD Executive Director Darren Turley said, "The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a great friend to and partner with TAD in looking out for the interests of the state's dairy industry, from practical advice for the producer to research that supports our future. And Dr. Ellen Jordan, the state's dairy specialist, is an invaluable asset both to the agency and to TAD. We are extremely honored by this recognition from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service." ▪

"Legislation," Continued from Page 1

Gov. Dan Patrick's top legislative priorities, numbered to correspond with the bill numbers of legislation.

While Patrick's priorities are specific, House Speaker Joe Straus is more interested in general subject areas – among them, school finance reform, increased oversight of the Texas Department of Child Protective Services and promoting entrepreneurship.

Among the bills already filed or planned are some that will be of particular significance to the dairy industry.

Those include:

SB 23 – E-Verify – Author not yet determined. The bill will address electronic verification of employment authorization to ensure that individuals employed by state partners are also authorized for employment. This is one of Patrick's priorities. The bill has not yet been filed nor has an author assigned.

HB 57 – Raw Milk – Rep. Dan Flynn (R-Van). The bill allows the sale of raw milk off-premise and at farmer's markets; includes some labeling, testing and transporting requirements.

SB 95 – Raw Milk – Sen. Bob Hall (R-Edgewood). The bill's provisions mirror HB 57 with minor differences.

Still to be filed – Milk Truck Bill. The bill will allow milk trucks to haul heavier on federal interstate highways, setting up a permit to bring the state into compliance with the federal FAST Act.

Your government affairs team will continue to monitor bills important to the dairy industry as they are filed. Bill filing deadline is March 10.

You also can review filed legislation on the state website: www.capitol.state.tx.us. ▪

Producers start charitable foundation

Texas dairy producers Donald and Cheri De Jong of Hartley have launched The De Jong Foundation to empower dairy farmers by investing in research, education and programs that inspire innovative practices and nourish the world through sustainable dairy farming.

The foundation recently awarded its first grant to Opportunity International, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping break the cycle of poverty by providing microloans, financial planning and training directly to small-scale farm entrepreneurs living in impoverished nations.

Learn more about the Foundation at www.dejong.foundation.

The De Jongs own three dairies: Natural Prairie Dairy Farms, Northside Farms and Jersey Gold Dairy. They also farm 50,000 acres of farmland in Texas and Colorado.

The couple was recently honored by the National Interfraternity Council Foundation as philanthropists of the year and named 2016 Producer of the Year by Top Producer Magazine. In addition, Donald De Jong is one of four organic producers on the 12-member Texas Organic Agricultural Industry Advisory Board of the Texas Department of Agriculture. ▪