

**Commissioner Todd Staples**  
**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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**TEXAS-MEXICO AGRICULTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM BUILDS A BRIDGE TO  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

*COEUR D'ALENE, ID* - Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples and General Director of the Agricultural Development Corporation of Nuevo Leon Fermin Montes Cavazos announced today the formation of the Texas-Mexico Agriculture Exchange Program. The educational opportunity will benefit agricultural leaders in Texas and Mexico, and connect the two agricultural powerhouses.

Commissioner Staples and Director General Montes Cavazos signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Nuevo Leon Department of Agriculture at the Tri-National Accord in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

"Developing leaders to tackle tomorrow's challenges is essential for the future

prosperity of Texas," Commissioner Staples said. "Mexico is Texas' largest trading partner. Providing opportunities for the best and brightest from Texas and Nuevo Leon to learn from each other will advance the agricultural industry and that results in superior service for consumers."

The purpose of the program is to provide an educational exchange to share information and improve understanding between Mexico and U.S. producers on agricultural production and trade in both countries.

The program involves reciprocal visits for young professionals from each state, who will be given the opportunity to work with agribusiness organizations that match their experience and requirements with host agricultural operations and industries.

The participating producers and agribusiness institutes will arrange for educational activities, interaction at organization events and meetings, and room and board for participants. The goal is for the professionals to gain knowledge about production practices and industry organization and then bring that information back home to share with colleagues.

A key component of the program is support from industry partners. Jon Means, president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, initially discussed the concept with Commissioner Staples and committed to help place the young leaders at excellent Texas ranches.

"Our neighbors to the south are some of our most valuable trading partners. This program will help future generations of cattle raisers to form life-long relationships that will benefit the cattle industry for many years to come," Means said.

The first exchange is set for spring of 2009.

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