

Statewide Offices: Agriculture Commissioner

Next in our "statewide races on the Nov. 3 ballot" series is the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the Democratic vision for that office.

The Texas Legislature established the TDA in 1907. The agency's key objectives are to promote production agriculture, consumer protection, economic development and healthy living. The agriculture commissioner oversees the agency and is elected every four years.

TDA's mission is to partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles, and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

TDA is also the agency leading the charge against the New World screwworm outbreak.

TDA's mission is

broad and touches areas beyond farming and ranching. I'll highlight four main issues that Democrats will focus on.

*** Affordable Food.** While corporate profits are sky-high, family farmers are paid pennies on the dollar of what they are owed, and consumers are being price-gouged. Corporate middlemen are both suppressing farm income and raising prices for consumers.

Democrats will fight for cheaper, healthier and more local foods that pay farmers their fair share while also ensuring food remains affordable, by limiting the ability of the greedy few corporate middlemen from monopolizing our food system.

*** Stopping AI Data Centers.** Data centers,



including those for AI, are cropping up across Texas. If we are not exceedingly smart with their design, placement and purpose, they will cause higher water and power bills, run water wells dry, and may hurt jobs.

The TDA can stop these irresponsible AI data centers from causing mass water/power inflation or harming Texans. Democrats will issue "Ag Impact Studies" to force data centers to be honest with their resource consumption.

*** New World Screwworm.** The New World Screwworm is a serious threat to Texas agriculture, livestock, wildlife and even household pets. If not handled immediately with all available tools at our disposal, this will not only harm Texas ranchers but it will also cause further inflation at the grocery store.

The good news is that we've beaten the New World Screwworm before, and we'll beat it again. Right now, the USDA is not allowing us to use every tool at our disposal. We're fighting the Screwworm with one arm tied behind our backs.

Democrats will push to deploy the Screwworm Adult Suppression System. Such a system worked with past infestations, so it is the missing tool we will, in all likelihood, need to fight back against the Screwworm.

We're years away from having anywhere near enough sterile flies. They alone are not the solution. The negative consequences of inaction far outweigh anything else for not just Texas ranchers, but for all those who eat

food in Texas.

*** Saving Big Bend.** Big Bend is a national treasure; bulldozers are coming to ruin it for Trump's border wall. Democrats will protect Big Bend. We must stop the stealing of private property, harming local communities, and the destruction of Texas treasures just to enrich the corrupt bigshots.

Several Congressional acts, including the Endangered Species Act, were all bypassed by the Department of Homeland Security through waivers to speed through harmful construction.

Tourism is the main source of revenue for the area, and the border wall will cut off access to the Rio Grande and view of the region's famous "dark skies," both key tourist attractions.

You don't need a border wall, or any of the other things they're building, between two 1,000-foot cliffs. We must stop scarring our natural heritage to enrich the corrupt bigshots.

Other Democratic priorities for the TDA include protecting our scarce water resources for Texas consumers, strengthening rural healthcare, stopping high-powered electric transmission lines, stopping the deployment of Flock surveillance cameras, and more.

The last day to register to vote in the November election is Oct. 5. Visit www.vote-texas.gov to check your registration or to register to vote. For details on the upcoming election, call our office at 830-331-1243 or visit www.kcdems.us

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