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*The Dampa News*

*Cover Photo Courtesy Charla Shults*

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# B&G Electric and Irrigation: The Panhandle's One-Stop Shop



By GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

For more than 25 years, B&G Electric and Irrigation has supplied the Texas Panhandle with products and services that have helped to maintain and provide our greatest resources: light and water.

From irrigation design and installation to light switches and transformers, B&G is certainly the one stop shop for any residential or commercial needs.

Farris Hightower has worked with B&G Electric for about 20 years, partnering with them during his time at Zimmatics as the regional sales manager, helping seal the deal between the two.

“It’s about providing parts and services to the producers that rely on us to get there quickly and get their issue taken care of and let them know that everything is back up and running,” said Hightower.

“Irrigation is such an essential need in this semi-arid desert that we live in, so it’s really important to get them back up and running quickly and efficiently.”

B&G Electric supplies producers all over the Texas Panhandle and has built a large, loyal customer base for services and supplies that would otherwise be difficult to find in this area.

“There are very few irrigation companies across the country that provide every-

thing from the center pivot irrigation to the well motors, all of the disconnects (and) all of the wire. We maintain a huge inventory,” Hightower said.

“Our services are available to absolutely every producer, and we go from the east side of Amarillo to the Oklahoma line and the I-40 area all the way north to the Oklahoma Panhandle. So we cover a really big area. We work with every farmer and rancher in Gray County. If there’s somebody that we don’t work with, I don’t know that,” he laughed.

When describing the products they provide, Hightower went into detail about how important accuracy and efficiency is when it comes to water distribution.

“So the center pivot itself is a water application device and for years center pivots were used to irrigate. What producers do today is precision application of water to provide the crop the water that it needs, when it needs it and the amount that it needs. (We) monitor that, so today we can tell exactly how much water goes on every degree of the circle as it goes around.”

“We can tell exactly how much water we’re applying and we can change that as-needed based on crop or soil type, and that’s (because of) the monitoring equipment- so, you know exactly what went on. You can program that to make changes as you need to

**ONE STOP** cont. on page 7



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## 2024 Gray County Junior Livestock Exhibitors

### Gray County 4H

- Kimber Becco
- Anleigh Bowers
- Bristol Bowers
- Hadleigh Bowers
- Maddox Bowers
- Colton Cambern
- Keilyn Cambern
- Makenzie Cambern
- Collin Campbell
- Chelsea Clark
- Melody Clark
- Miles Clark
- Ember Cowan
- Ivey Cowan
- Katie Davis
- Kenedie Davis
- Tell Douglas
- Aaron Elkins
- Brody Elkins
- Jordyn Elkins
- Gavin Greer

- Landon Greer
- Alexandria Hembree
- Blake Hembree-Parkin
- Charles Hembree-Parkin
- Hagen Hudson
- Stran Hudson
- Charles Jones
- Lilian Linquist
- Flannery May
- Maverick Medley
- Piper Morgan
- Raycen Newman
- Hope Scribner
- Augustus Sprouse
- Gatlyn Thomas
- Gunter Thomas

### McLean FFA

- Brynlee Allen
- Emma Banks
- Gabby Hernandez
- Jasmine Hernandez

- Jacob Hess
- Bryce Meadows
- Gracie Meadows
- Mallery Reynolds
- Kyanna Rice
- Elizabeth Schwalk
- Jasmine Schwalk
- Shae Seymour
- Carlee Simpson
- Kenzington Skipper
- Kodey Skipper
- Devin Smith
- Ashlyn Stone

### Pampa FFA

- Kassidie Arreola
- Alexis Bridges
- Carlos Campa
- Easton Childress
- Mason Childress
- Jerritt Fergason
- Joseph Fergason

- Bryce Gosling
- Baileigh Lemons
- Calloway McLaughlin
- Carter McLaughlin
- Alli Montgomery
- Brooklynn Neill
- Saige Owen
- Marina Rodriguez
- Rebecca Shackelford
- Rylee Watkins
- Judson Wilhite

### Class of 2024 Exhibitors

- Alexis Bridges-Pampa FFA
- Colton Cambern-Gray County 4H
- Carlos Campa-Pampa FFA
- Ivey Cowan-Gray County 4H
- Joseph Fergason-Pampa FFA
- Saige Owen-Pampa FFA





# 2024 Gray County Junior Livestock Results

## Swine

- Grand Champion
- Keilyn Cambern with Pampa FFA won the Grand Champion Award for Duroc pig.
- Reserve Grand
- Colton Cambern with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Grand Award for Duroc pig.
- Breed Champions
- Collin Campbell with the Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Hamp pig and Spot pig.
- Kyanna Rice with McLean FFA won the Breed Champion Award for Berk Pig.
- Jordyn Elkins with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for White OPB pig.
- Raycen Newman with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Poland pig.
- Gavin Greer with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for York pig.
- Shae Seymour with McLean FFA won the Breed Champion Award for cross-bred pig.
- Reserve Breed
- Gavin Greer with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Berk pig.
- Gatlyn Thomas with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Spot pig.
- Raycen Newman with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for cross-bred pig.
- Other Awards
- First Place
- Kimber Becco with Gray County 4H won first place for Berk pig.
- Gatlyn Thomas with Gray County 4H won first place for

- Poland pig.
- Emma Banks with McLean FFA won first place for York pig.
- Jasmine Schwalk with McLean FFA won first place for Cross-bred pig.
- Devin Smith with McLean FFA won first place for Cross-bred pig.
- Kimber Becco with Gray County 4H won first place for Hamp pig.
- Second Place
- Ashlyn Stone with McLean FFA won second place for Berk pig.
- Kassidie Arreola with Pampa FFA won second place for Duroc pig.
- Calloway McLaughlin with Pampa FFA won second place for Duroc pig.
- Carlos Campa with Pampa FFA won second place for York pig.
- Keilyn Cambern with Gray County 4H won second place for Cross-bred pig.
- Gracie Meadows with McLean FFA won second place for Cross-bred pig.
- Third Place
- Gunter Thomas with Gray County 4H won third place for Berk pig.
- Rylee Watkins with Pampa FFA won third place for White OPB pig.
- Maverick Medley with Gray County 4H won third place for Duroc pig.
- Marina Rodriguez with Pampa FFA won third place for Hamp pig.
- Melody Clark with Gray County 4H won third place for Poland pig.
- Brooklynn Neill with Pampa FFA won third place for

- York pig.
- Easton Childress with Pampa FFA won third place for Cross-bred pig.
- Chelsea Clark with Gray County 4H won third place for Cross-bred pig.
- Brycen Meadows with McLean FFA won third place for Cross-bred pig.
- Augustus Sprouse with Gray County 4H won third place for Cross-bred pig.
- Fourth Place
- Baileigh Lemons with Pampa FFA won fourth place for White OPB pig.
- Carlee Simpson with McLean FFA won fourth place for Hamp pig.
- Brody Elkins with Gray County 4H won fourth place for Hamp pig.
- Mason Childress with Pampa FFA won fourth place for Cross-bred pig.
- Tell Douglas with Gray County 4H won fourth place for Cross-bred pig.
- Fifth Place
- Aaron Elkins with Gray County 4H won fifth place for Hamp pig
- Lamb**
- Grand Champion
- Bristol Bowers with Gray County 4H won the Grand Champion Award for Medium Wool lamb.
- Reserve Grand
- Maliery Reynolds with McLean FFA won the Reserve Grand Award for Medium Wool lamb.
- Breed Champions
- Alexandria Hembree with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Finewool lamb.
- Saige Owen with Pampa

- FFA won the Breed Champion Award for Southdown lamb.
- Lilian Linquist with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Finewool Cross lamb.
- Reserve Breed
- Gabby Hernandez with McLean FFA won the Reserve Breed Award for Finewool lamb.
- Brynlee Allen with McLean FFA won the Reserve Breed Award for Southdown lamb.
- Jerritt Furgason with Pampa FFA won the Reserve Breed Award for Finewool Cross lamb.
- Other Awards
- First Place
- Jerritt Furgason with Pampa FFA won first place for Southdown lamb.
- Charles Hembree with Gray County 4H won first place for Medium Wool lamb.
- Bryce Gosling with Pampa FFA won first place for Medium Wool lamb.
- Second Place
- Saige Owen with Pampa FFA won second place for Medium Wool lamb.
- Third Place
- Elizabeth Schwalk with McLean FFA won third place for Southdown lamb.
- Rebecca Shackelford with Pampa FFA won third place for Medium Wool lamb.
- Fourth Place
- Jasmine Hernandez with McLean FFA won fourth place for Medium Wool lamb.
- Fifth Place
- Lilian Linquist with Gray County 4H won fifth place for Medium Wool lamb.





## Results

### Continued From Page 5

- Sixth Place
- Blake Hembree with Gray County 4H won sixth place for Medium Wool lamb.

### Goat

- Grand Champion
- Hope Scribner won the Grand Champion Award.
- Reserve Grand
  - Stran Hudson won the Reserve Grand Award.
- Other Awards
- Flannery May with Gray County 4H won first place.
- Hagen Hudson with Gray County 4H won first place.
- Second Place
  - Kenzington Skipper with McLean FFA won second place.
  - Hadleigh Bowers with Gray County 4H won second place.
  - Jacob Hess with McLean FFA won second place.
- Third Place
  - Jerritt Furgason with Pampa FFA won third place.
  - Bryce Gosling with Pampa FFA won third place.
  - Kenzington Skipper with

McLean FFA won third place.

- Flannery May with Gray County 4H won third place.
- Fourth Place
  - Kodey Skipper with McLean FFA won fourth place.
  - Bryce Gosling with Pampa FFA won fourth place.
- Fifth Place

### Heifer

- Grand Champion
  - Katie Davis with Gray County 4H won the Grand Champion Award for Simmental heifer.
- Reserve Grand
  - Hope Scribner with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Grand Award for Chianina heifer.
- Breed Champion
  - Ember Cowan with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Brahman heifer.
  - Makenzie Cambern with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Commercial heifer.
  - Coldon Camber with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Red Angus heifer.
- Reserve Breed
  - Kenedie Davis with Gray

County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Chianina heifer.

• Hope Scribner with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Simmental heifer.

### Steer

- Grand Champion
  - Kenedie Davis with Gray County 4H won the Grand Champion Award for AOB steer.
- Reserve Grand
  - Ember Cowan with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Grand Award for Simmental steer.
- Breed Champion
  - Anleigh Bowers with the Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Maine and Hereford steer.
  - Katie Davis with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for American steer.
  - Kenedie Davis with Gray County 4H won the Breed Champion Award for Charolais steer.
- Reserve Breed
  - Ivey Cowan with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Angus and Hereford steer.

• Judson Whilite with Pampa FFA won the Reserve Breed Award for American steer.

• Maddox Bowers with Gray County 4H won the Reserve Breed Award for Maine steer.

• Judson Whilite with Pampa FFA won the Reserve Breed Award for Simmental steer.

- Other Awards
- First Place
  - Hope Scribner with Gray County 4H won first place for Shorthorn and Chianina steer.

- Katie Davis with Gray County 4H won first place for Limousine steer.

- Anleigh Bowers with Gray County 4H won first place for Maine steer.

- Second Place
  - Ivey Cowan with Gray County 4H won second place for Hereford and Angus steer.

- Maddox Bowers with Gray County 4H won second place for Maine steer.

- Ember Cowan with Gray County 4H won second place for Simmental and AOB steer.

- Third Place
  - Colton Cambern with Gray County 4H won third place for AOB steer.

**MORE PHOTOS PGS. 9-11!**





Photo by Geneva Wildcat

Farris Hightower of B&G Electric & Irrigation.

based on rainfall or maybe if something happened. All that equipment is monitored 24 hours a day. If something hap-

# One Stop

Continued From Page 3

pens to the equipment for any reason, whether it be if electricity goes off or water pressure went down or whatever the case may be, that producer gets a text message within usually about 5 seconds. It's very immediate and because of that, it allows them to really understand what's going on in their irrigation and allows them to raise a better crop and become better stewards of the water."

"Farmers and ranchers have always been great stewards, but because of technology, they're even better stewards today."

"If a big rain storm comes through and dumps three inches of rainfall, they can just shut all that equipment down. They don't have to drive out there or muck through the mud, they can shut it down from their phone or their computer. So,

all of these devices are that well-monitored."

"When we design a new center pivot, we are able to get 98 percent of the water that's pumped to the crop. In other words, our application efficiency is *that* good. We're putting almost all that water where a crop can get to it. We don't put water in the wind, we're really careful about the water and minimizing those losses."

Aside from the products and services that B&G Electric provides, their customer service deserves just as much of the spotlight.

"We try to be prompt and get it right and take care of the customers and try to be fair and people recognize that. We try to do a really good job of taking care of the customer and making sure they're efficient as they can be and that we carry all of the parts they need," Hightower shared.



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By GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

Just a few years shy of a century, the Top of Texas Livestock Association has been in operation for Gray County helping to guide the youth of Texas to a future of success through hard work, dedication, and community.

The Top of Texas Livestock Association is operated by the Gray County Buyers Club, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support Pampa's FFA and 4-H chapters through fundraisers, organizing local shows and paying premiums for livestock programs entered in the county shows and sale.

The GCBC is composed of Ryan Davis, President; Chandler Bowers, Vice President; Jenna Bowers, Treasurer; Dana Terry, Co-Treasurer, and Deborah Davis, Secretary; Pampa FFA instructors Alan Parker and

Rex Childress; McLean FFA instructor, Cali Pontnack; Gray County 4-H coordinator, Marcus Preuninger, along with many parents, volunteers, sponsors and donors who help the Gray County Buyers Club successful in their mission.

The 10-year GCBC President and lifelong Pampa resident, Ryan Davis, has generational ties to livestock and agriculture that stem from his days working on his father's farm with his brother.

"We've always had close ties to agriculture and always wanted to see the advance of agriculture and education of agriculture. Between that and my daughters being interested in livestock led me to become more and more involved with this organization," Davis said.

"My daughter started when she was nine. I'd go to meet-

**CLUB** cont. on page 13





# Club

Continued From Page 12

ings and kind of sit in the back and watch. As your kids get older and people leave the organization, you just kind of move up. It feels like home.”

The Gray County Buyers Club holds fundraisers every year to host the stock shows and sales that the Pampa FFA and 4-H club kids work all year to participate in and allow them to travel to different places and have experiences that they might oth-

erwise not have. Through the numerous volunteers and sponsors with the Gray County Buyers Club, the participants have been able to showcase their animals all around Texas and make their community proud.

But in order to get to that point, the kids have their work cut out for them.

The Pampa FFA and 4-H chapters feature kids from third grade to seniors in high school who have dedicated themselves to a certain set of principles and values that are focused on reaching goals that will impact and shape their futures as contributing members of society.

“It teaches a lot of discipline and a lot of hard work. You’ve got to have animals to take care of on a daily basis and feed and work with them on a daily basis, so it takes a lot of time and pa-

tience. It teaches them a lot.” But raising high-grade animals isn’t the only thing that the Pampa FFA and 4-H kids have to devote their time to.

“I want people to know and the owners to know that these kids are required to come and help. They are required to come to barn clean-ups and push a broom and sweep and haul out hay and take out trash. They’re required to participate in these proceeds,” Davis said.

Competitors who have showcased and sold their livestock are given monetary awards with the help of the numerous sponsors and donors who have contributed to the Gray County Buyers Club.

“We’re not just giving them this money, they’ve gotta work for it. We do keep track of that and they’re diligent about it. These kids are out there working hard and

we’ve got a good group. They show up and when there’s something that needs to be done, they get it done. And they have a lot of fun doing it,” Davis smiled.

Davis encourages anyone who would like to volunteer or become a sponsor or for any general information about the Gray County Buyers Club to reach out to him either through their Facebook page or by calling 806-886-8118.

Davis reiterated his gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the Gray County Buyers Club and to the kids involved with FFA and 4-H.

“I just want to thank all the parents that get their kids out there that help us with what we do and thank all of our sponsors. They’ve all been great to us.”

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## White Deer Senior Crowned Texas Cover Miss in Texas Miss United States Agriculture Pageant

■ Juliana Sirmans heads to National pageant in July

BY MIRANDA ELLIS  
editor@thepampanews.com

Carson County's Miss United States Agriculture recently garnered a state title at the Texas Miss United States Agriculture pageant held in Temple, TX in November.

After putting months of effort into selling ad sponsorships, White Deer senior Juliana Sirmans exceeded her goals and snagged the state Cover Miss title.

"Originally, my goal was to sell ten ad pages. I sold 16 full ad pages, and that earned me the title Texas Cover Miss," Sirmans said.

"I also earned a \$500 scholarship that I get to redeem when I retire my crown next year in November in Decatur (TX), so that's really exciting."

Sirmans was also named the third runner-up for the overall state title of Texas Miss United States Agriculture.

"It's pretty exciting," she shared.

Now that the state title of Texas Cover Miss is under her belt, it's on to Nationals for Sirmans.

"I will get to move on to Nationals in July in Enterprise, AL. It will go with higher stakes, authority and scholarships. The Miss United States Agriculture Program is strictly scholarship-based. Any money raised by the program will go back to me or the other queens that are competing."

This also means that it's time for her to find more ad sponsors, starting now. (If

you would like to sponsor Sirmans' bid for the National title of Cover Miss, you can e-mail her at julianasirmans@yahoo.com.)

### A love for agriculture & pageantry stemming from time spent in FFA:

"My freshman year of high school I joined FFA and that's what really opened my eyes to everything good in agriculture. I knew about agriculture, farming and ranching because my dad was a fourth-generation rancher and I grew up going to stock shows and around horse and cattle. I knew what it was, but I didn't understand the importance of it until I slowly started going through competitions, different kinds of speaking events, leadership events and career development events through FFA. It really showed me how important it is that people are out there advocating for people in agriculture," she shared in a previous interview with The Pampa News.

"My entire program is based on women in agriculture. Since 1969, women have been allowed in the FFA program and so that's opened the door for many scholarship and job opportunities."

Starting in September 2023, Sirmans was named President of her local FFA chapter, and she has recently advanced to Area after winning first in District in Prepared Public Speaking and AgriBusiness as well as in Public Relations in Leadership Development.

Sirmans is also involved in three areas within FFA Career Development Events, including poultry, veterinary science and food science.

"I also show goats through FFA. This year, I have four; my

**PAGEANT** cont. on page 16

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**ALL AD PAGES ARE DUE**

**MARCH 25TH!**







## Pageant

Continued From Page 14

doe Barbie, she's super sweet, super sassy, I love her so much; and then I have three wethers, they are there a lot of fun.," Sirmans shared.

### FFA and Pageantry paving the road to the future

Sirmans wants to study veterinary science at Texas Tech upon graduating high school.

"I want to be a livestock veterinarian. If I can become a large animal practitioner, I would love that, but I really want to focus on livestock," she said.

"That way, I can get a business going and start actually working out in the medical field with veterinarians all around the state. I do want to end up coming back to a more rural area. I've been in a rural area all my life- I've seen just how important it is that we have livestock veterinarians close by in local areas."



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## JODI ASHBY Executive Director



Introducing Jodi Ashby, our newly appointed Executive Director of Economic Development. Jodi brings a decade of experience in rural economic development and a profound understanding of the intricacies of natural resource markets. Her expertise lies in the recruitment, retention, and expansion of industries, coupled with a robust focus on workforce development and quality of life. Jodi is enthusiastic about helping to restore and enhance Pampa's vibrant culture and quality of life!



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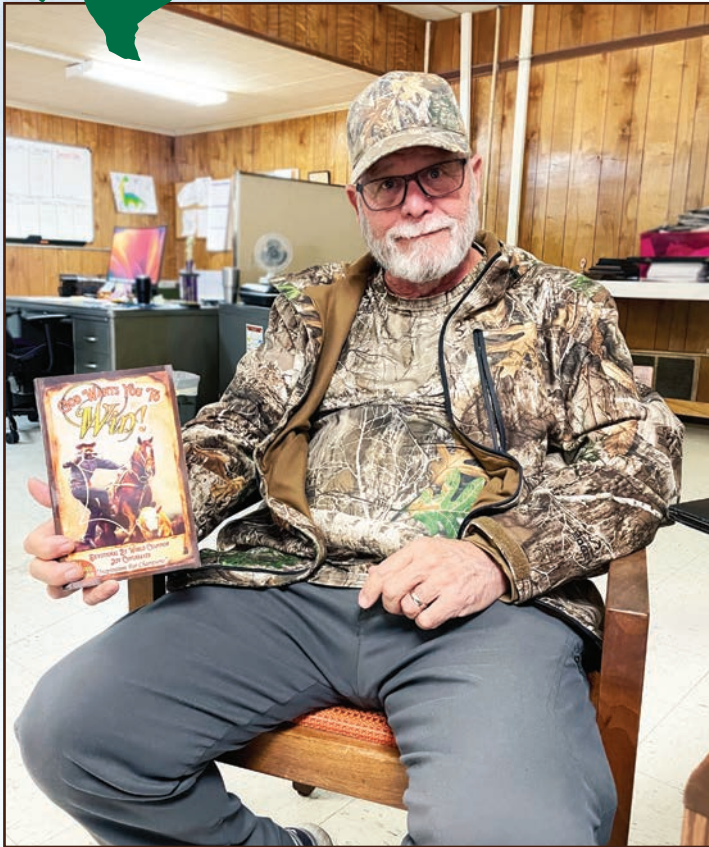
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# Meyer Land & Cattle Company

BY MIRANDA ELLIS  
 editor@thepampanews.com

Greg Meyer, a Texas resident, man of God and cattleman has recently expanded his family's ranch to grow and sell hay commercially.

"Beforehand, when we raised (hay), it was for our cattle. Now, we're doing it for business. We're still in the early stages of that and still buying equipment," Meyer said.

After a trial-run first year, Meyer and his brother John worked out some minor machinery issues and have gauged the needs and interests of their potential customer base.

"Our whole aim is to get into the alfalfa business," Meyer shared.

While this expansion is hopefully a new source of income for the Meyer brothers, they originally planted the hay on their land as a measure of fire-prevention.

Located near Skellytown, the family's land has been no stranger to wild-fires and high wind.

"That ranch had been burned up totally three times. And fortunately, God spared the ranch house. So, we planted some acres around the house to the south and west to prevent that, mostly in the plot near the house. Believe it or not, we had a fire (shortly after planting) and it came right up to the hay line. Because it was green, it stopped that fire," he said.

"We're in the process of recapturing the land that went back to nature for over thirty years."

By timing the planting of their hay so that it will be green during fire season, Meyer has effectively added a measure of safety for his ranch house while also using it as an opportunity to revitalize the soil on the land.

Aside from alfalfa, Meyer also utilizes sudan hay.

"Because it's really sandy out there, we went to Sudan. Sudan has a root structure that helps get the sand converted back to usable soil. It's also a good hay crop," he explained.

## Man of God and the Sky

Aside from running the family ranch, Meyer recently obtained his pilot's license and spends as much time as he can spreading his ministry.

"Let me just put it this way: I've got an area where the Lord calls me to go in and do certain things and I stay under the radar," Meyer says.

The citizens of Pampa and surrounding areas may have seen in numerous places a devotional entitled *God Wants You to Win!* by Jeff Copenhaver, whose father is the famous two-time world champion bull-rider featured on the front cover.

Greg, along with many other volunteers and missionaries, have traveled around the country and abroad giving away the devotionals by the thousands.

"They're in Spanish and

**MEYER** cont. on page 19



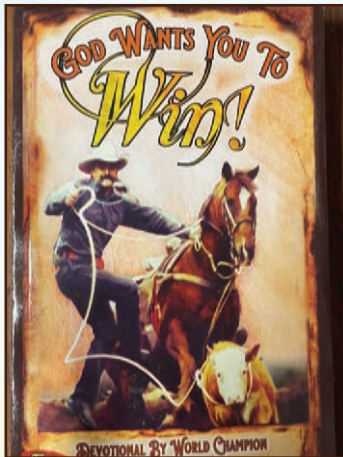
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# Meyer

Continued From Page 18

they're in Russian. One of our guys is a missionary in Ukraine, of all places," Meyer said.

"We went to the rodeos, the national rodeos, and another group we went to were the FFAs, especially the state and national conventions. We would give out literally

thousands of them."

The devotional focuses on what the great American cowboy is all about: dedication, hard work, helping others and a strong faith in God, values that Meyer wholeheartedly believes and upholds.

In addition to answering the call of the Lord to his ministry, Meyer shares that God encouraged him to go and get his pilot's license.

"The Lord said to get my pilot's license, and so I got

my pilot's license. I don't have the plane yet, but I know what it's going to look like and I know the Lord will bring it if He told me to get my license. I'm 70 years old and I can't wait to see what's coming next," he shared excitedly.

For more information on the Meyer Land and Cattle Co. or the ministry, contact Greg Meyer at 512-573-3178.

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# Career Opportunities in the Agricultural Sector

Individuals approach their careers in various ways. Some may aspire to climb the corporate ladder, while others may pursue a career that affords them ample personal time to spend how they see fit. Many individuals look for careers that afford them ample opportunities to work in the great outdoors, which could make the agricultural sector an appealing industry.

Talented individuals with an array of diverse skills dot the agricultural sector landscape, and the following are just a few of the many ca-

reers to consider within this vital industry.

- **Equipment technician:** Data from the career experts at Indeed indicates agricultural equipment technicians earn an average salary around \$65,000 per year. Agricultural equipment technicians maintain and repair existing machines and install new ones, among their many responsibilities.

- **Purchasing agent:** An agricultural purchasing agent buys products and raw materials at wholesale. Indeed notes that purchasing agents often must meet specific pur-



chasing quotas for processors and work with various clients who supply an array of agricultural products. The national average salary for agricultural purchasing agents is around \$51,000 annually.

- **Warehouse manager:** The receiving, shipping and storage of agricultural materials is overseen by a warehouse manager. Indeed notes that these professionals now routinely utilize artificial intelligence products to manage inventory. Warehouse managers must know and adhere to safety procedures and guidelines that dictate how materials and products are stored. The average salary of a warehouse manager is around \$52,000 per year.

- **Sales:** Like every industry, the agricultural sector requires talented sales personnel. Agricultural sales reps sell materials and products and identify the needs of potential customers. Agricultural sales reps may spend ample time on the road at trade shows. Doing so al-

lows them to identify customers as well as their needs and wants, and promote their own products and services. An ability to foster strong and trusting interpersonal relationships is invaluable for agricultural sales reps, who Indeed reports earn an average of about \$60,000 per year.

- **Environmental engineer:** Environmental engineers play pivotal roles within the industry, and could become even more vital in the decades ahead as the effects of climate change become more apparent. Environmental engineers design and implement solutions that occur on agricultural sites, helping to address issues such as unhealthy soil, insufficient drainage and inefficiencies, among other concerns. A career as an environmental engineer within the agricultural industry can be rewarding and lucrative, with Indeed noting that the average annual salary for this position is a little more than \$77,000.

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# Lashmet Livestock: Rooted in Love and Community

BY GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

Tyrel and Tiffany Lashmet are no strangers to the livestock and ranching lifestyle, and with their love for the land, animals, community (and each other), Lashmet Livestock was formed.

“We were both involved in livestock growing up our whole lives, it’s been in our blood,” Tyrel said. “We showed livestock, raised livestock-it was just a natural progression for us to be involved even before we had kids.”

Located a few miles north of White Deer, Lashmet Livestock is an agricultural service that raises and sells award-winning livestock that have been featured in many stock shows and sales all around the country.

Tyrel Lashmet grew up in Tulia, Texas and was raised around livestock and ranching, a fulfilling lifestyle that he has proudly passed on to his children.

Tyrel is also the Cattle Superintendent for the Top o’ Texas Livestock Association and has close ties to long-



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time friends Ryan Davis and Chandler Bowers through helping their kids throughout the programs they’ve been involved with.

His wife of 10 years, Tiffany (Dowell) Lashmet grew up in Tucumcari, New Mexico where her family has raised show lambs for over 50 years, a business that has since partnered with Lashmet Livestock in an effort to produce award-winning Ewe lambs to ever grace (or graze) the Texas Panhandle and New Mexico.

But raising livestock is not how the Lashmets make their living as they both have full time jobs that are a direct correlation of the agricultural lifestyle they’ve embraced since childhood.

Tiffany has served as the State Wide Agricultural Law Specialist for Texas A&M

AgriLife Extension for more than ten years, providing educational outreach all around Texas regarding different legal issues that effect landowners and agricultural producers.

“It’s a dream job for me. If you could’ve written up the perfect job, this is it for me,” Tiffany said.

She also writes blogs and has a podcast about current agricultural issues and can be read at [agrilife.org/texasaglaw](http://agrilife.org/texasaglaw) and heard at [aglaw.libsyn.com](http://aglaw.libsyn.com)

Tyrel has worked for the oil and gas industry for several years, working as a contractor with his own business for nearly ten years and is currently a technician for NuStar Energy covering the Eastern Texas Panhandle.

**LASHMET** cont. on page 23





ward person and never met a stranger, but it's taught him to slow down and think about things. It also helped him to communicate with people better than he had been. I think the deliberate part of having to train an animal teaches them lots and lots of patience," Tyrel said of their son, Braun.

"We bought her this steer and a year and a half later, she's a different kid. She's shown all over the country, her confidence is completely different. She leads this calf around and talks to the judges, it's been amazing," Tiffany said of their daughter, Harper.

"I think it's just the connection between the kid and the animal. I think what we overlook is the connection

between the kid and the animal and the difference that can make."

Being a part of the Gray County Buyers Club and the Top o' Texas Livestock Association has enabled the Lashmets to build long-lasting relationships with the parents and kids over the years, who the Lashmets consider as extended family.

"I think that another benefit with 4-H and FFA is the relationships that you make with other adults," Tiffany said.

"I think as a kid, it's really cool that you have all these other adults in your life that you know are supporting you, like an extended fam-

**LASHMET** cont. on page 28

# Lashmet

Continued From Page 22

"I ended up in the oil and gas industry and a lot of guys who are successful in that industry grew up as AG kids," Tyrel said. "I think that speaks to AG and the whole program as well. We wouldn't be able to have these jobs and wouldn't be where we are without where we started as kids."

As Tyrel and Tiffany both embody the agricultural lifestyle and are well aware of the benefits and rewards from starting early, they were determined to pass on those

values to their children, Braun and Harper Lashmet.

"I think the natural progression for us as a family is we knew how well it helped us growing up and our maturity and then our careers after school. We wanted our kids involved as soon as we could," Tyrel said.

Although both children are too young to be in FFA or 4-H, they have competed (and won) in many Mini Hereford and lamb shows around Texas and Colorado, building their self-confidence and character in different ways.

"Our son has always kind of been more of an out-



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# Texas Farm Bureau

By GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

For more than 90 years, Texas Farm Bureau has been providing services to farmers, ranchers, producers and families who reside in the Great State of Texas with more than 500,000 members and growing.

Members are able to take advantage of the numerous benefits that Texas Farm Bureau offers: from health, home and vehicle insurance plans to fit any need, to travel discounts, online classes and scholarships.

Texas Farm Bureau Agency Manager for Gray and Roberts County, Cade Taylor, is a proud lifelong Texas resident and has lived in Pampa since 2017.

Hailing from Childress, TX, Taylor started working for Texas Farm Bureau in south Waco, TX when he jumped on the opportunity to move to Pampa with his family.

“The opportunity to come to Pampa came up and I knew that’s where I wanted to move my family and that’s where I wanted to be and where I wanted to raise my kids,” Taylor said.

“There’s something that’s just unique about being in the Panhandle and there’s something unique about being in this part of the country that makes it special and I think we were here for two weeks before we knew that we were not going to move. We wanted to plant roots and



we started planting them as deep as we could.”

Echoing the same sentiment of other Texas Panhandle residents, the community and humble, close-knit relationships that are prevalent within the small, rural towns are what gives the Panhandle its appeal and for Taylor, Pampa was the apple of his eye.

“The people, our farmers, ranchers and producers, business owners—that’s what makes this place unique. Every day is an awesome day,” smiled Taylor.

“I enjoy a daily routine of being able to see the people that make each other’s worlds go round in this town because we all have to exist to help each other and at the end of the day, that’s what we’re all in the mis-

**TEXAS** cont. on page 27

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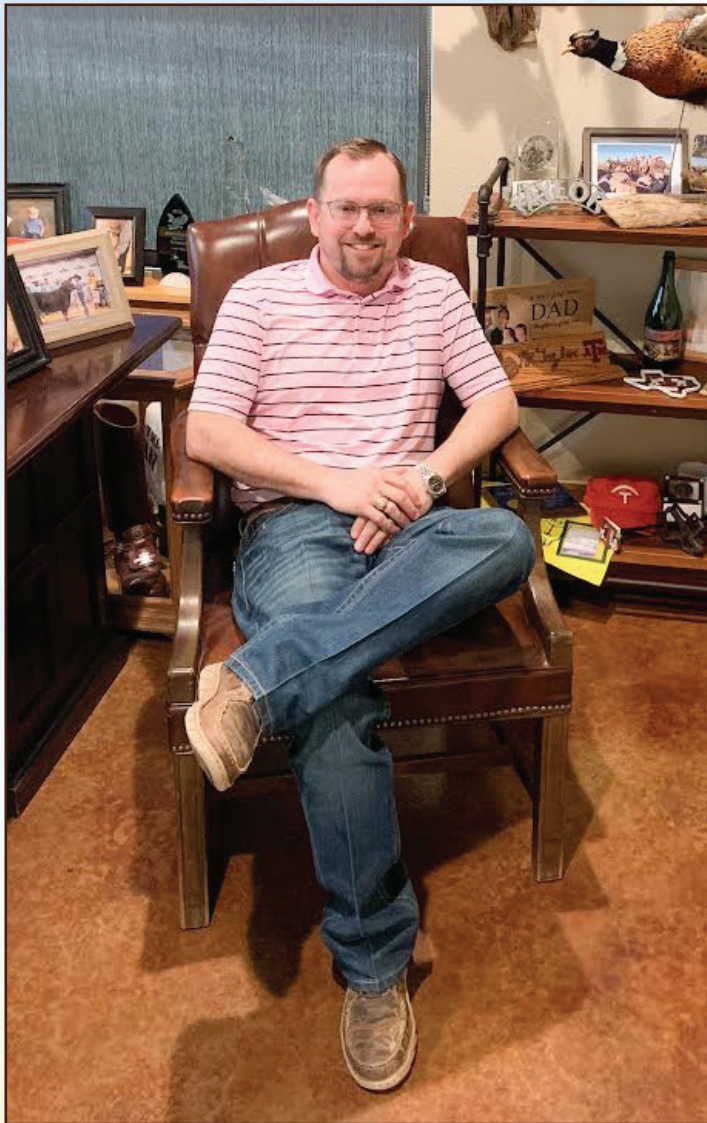
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tions of who we are. With so many things moving online, we try to combat that in providing value here locally.”

While the Texas Farm Bureau Pampa branch serves Gray and Roberts counties, they have provided services to other counties as well, extending their unique approach that has built them a network of satisfied clients.

“At the end of the day, you’re going to end up with a person that’s going to take care of you. We try to keep a very traditional approach to the insurance products and keep what the value is and that is actually having somebody that represents you and providing the advice on those products.”

When inquired about what

his job means to him, Cade Taylor’s answer was simple and heartfelt.

“I know that every day I get a chance to help somebody and that’s where I make my living: helping somebody and serving somebody-giving what I can to folks and everybody in this office does the same thing. That’s our mission,” he said.

“We’re in the business of taking care of members.”

For more information about the services and products that Texas Farm Bureau provides, visit their location at 2419 N. Hobart in Pampa or visit [www.texasfarmbureau.org](http://www.texasfarmbureau.org), or call 806-665-8451.

## Texas

Continued From Page 25

sion of: trying to take care of people.”

With about 2,000 members for Gray County, Cade Taylor and his team make it a mission to provide the best service and products to the citizens of Pampa and surrounding areas, resulting in years-long and lasting relationships with their clients.

“We work hand in hand with our rural producers, farmers and ranchers to pro-

vide those member benefits and those insurance products that they need to help them do their day-to-day,” Taylor said.

With the rise of online services, Taylor and his team know that human interaction is far more important now than ever before, and in order for a potential client to get all information they need to move forward with a plan, a more traditional approach is absolutely necessary.

“We try to keep our relationships very traditional. We try to keep a handshake and face-to-face conversa-

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# Lashmet

Continued From Page 23

ily. I think the value of that to kids when they're growing up, that they don't have to just rely on their parents to go to. They have another support system of adults and I think that really matters."

Working with livestock and contributing to and participating in the shows and sales is a different kind of bonding experience, not just with humans and animals, but for the Lashmets, the family dynamic is strengthened in a unique way as well.

"It's a lot of work-it's very



time intensive and sometimes stressful, but you have

the ability as parents to decide what is going to be intensive, what is going to be stressful and you can build into your family being able to handle and achieve those goals," Tyrel said.

"Looking at it from the outside, I don't think it makes a lot of sense to some people because it's a lot of time and a lot of money and it's this huge commitment, but when you're in, you see the benefits that it has on the kids and the families," Tif-

fany said.

"Livestock showing is something unique in that we get to do it as a family. Our kids play basketball and we go to the gym and we sit in the bleachers and they play and the coach coaches them. Go to a stock show and the whole family loads up in the vehicle and the whole family takes care of the animals and the whole family goes to the show. The chance to do all this as a family is just so unique."



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# GO TEXAN Program Celebrates 25 Years



TEXAS AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) proudly mark the 25th birthday of the GO TEXAN program. This milestone reflects a quarter-century of unwavering commitment to promoting and supporting Texas agriculture. Established in 1999, the GO TEXAN program has been a driving force in fostering economic growth, highlighting the diversity of Texan products, and championing the state's agricultural producers.

The GO TEXAN program has played a pivotal role in bringing attention to the rich tapestry of agricultural offerings that define the Lone Star State, from the sun-kissed plains to the flourishing vineyards. Over the past 25 years, the program has seam-

lessly connected consumers with local farmers, ranchers, and producers, fostering a sense of pride and loyalty to local businesses.

"This birthday celebration symbolizes TDA's 25-year commitment to showcasing the unparalleled quality and variety of Texas products," Commissioner Miller said. "The GO TEXAN program has empowered our farmers and ranchers and allowed consumers to make informed choices about supporting local businesses. I take great pride in the program's accomplishments and its enduring impact on the state's agricultural landscape."

As part of the celebration, TDA encourages consumers to actively participate in supporting local businesses by choosing GO TEXAN products. By doing so, Texans can contribute to the continued success of the

state's agricultural industry and celebrate the spirit of Texas pride.

The GO TEXAN program has grown to encompass a wide range of products, including fresh produce, meats, wines, and other specialty goods. The recognizable GO TEXAN mark has become a symbol of quality and authenticity, signifying that a product is proudly grown or made in Texas.

As the Texas Department of Agriculture looks back on the achievements of the past 25 years, it also looks forward to the future, committed to further expanding the reach and impact of the GO TEXAN program. With a vision for continued growth

and success, the program remains an enduring testament to the resilience, innovation, and excellence of Texas agriculture.

"GO TEXAN's resilience and adaptability has been a hallmark of its 25-year journey," said Commissioner Miller. "Looking towards the next 25 years, GO TEXAN stands poised to continue shaping the future of Texas agriculture for generations to come."

For more information about the GO TEXAN program and the 25th birthday, please click here.

Or you can follow @GO-TEXAN.

For additional information, please visit TDA's website.

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# Dairy Production in 2024



Texas A&M AgriLife Photo by Michael Miller

The Texas dairy industry has seen a decline in numbers over the past two years of drought, but producers are optimistic going into 2024.

By KAY LEDBETTER  
Texas A&M Agrilife

Dairy producers are optimistic 2024 will be better after recent rains offered the promise of more feed and forage production following back-to-back years of drought-related challenges, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Additionally, the initial passage of Congressional legislation, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, by the U.S. House of Representatives could signal an increase in demand nationwide, said Jennifer Spencer, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension dairy specialist and assistant professor in the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science, Stephenville.

The past two years have been very tough on Texas dairy producers due to drought. Lower numbers of cows and dairies in Texas reflect the challenging production and market conditions for producers, Spencer said. In 2022, there were 653,000 cows; in 2023, that number had fallen to 635,000. The number of dairies also decreased, falling below 300 at the beginning of 2024, down from 315 in 2022.

However, Spencer said Texas milk production rose in 2023.

“Our milk production per cow went up a little bit, and we are now the third highest milk-producing state in the nation, ranking only behind California and Wisconsin,” she said. “We went from producing 1.648 billion pounds of milk to 1.653 billion pounds from 2022 to 2023.”

## Higher costs, falling prices

The largest hit dairy producers took in 2023 was from falling milk prices. Spencer said the uniform milk price fell from \$23.68 per hundredweight in 2022 to \$18.98 per hundredweight in 2023. And the price of cheese averaged about \$2 per hundredweight below both of those.

“With those lower prices and the drought that was experienced for the past two years pushing feed prices higher, it has been very challenging for dairy producers to achieve break-even,” she said.

Spencer said 2024 could be a transition year. She expects a further decrease in dairy numbers, but an overall increase in Texas dairy herd size. The average herd size in East Tex-

as is about 1,000 cows, and in Central Texas, herds are typically in the 1,500 to 2,000 cow range. In the High Plains, dairy herds average 5,000 cows or more.

Most Texas dairy cows are in the Panhandle and account for more than 75% of the state’s milk production. The No. 1 producing county is Hartley, accounting for approximately 19% of Texas’s milk production. By comparison, regions like Central and East Texas account for 15% and 3%, respectively.

## Positives on the horizon

Despite challenges, many producers are optimistic about seeing what 2024 brings in the way of feed production and market demand, Spencer said.

“We are hoping for a better crop year, and with the latest precipitation, we don’t expect producers to be struggling as much as the past few years,” she said.

Aside from improved cropping conditions going into spring, the demand for Texas milk could also be heading in a positive direction.

Four different processing facilities are just opening or under construction in the state, which could increase demand for Texas milk. Cacique Foods, a cheese plant, opened in May in Amarillo, and construction of the Great Lakes Cheese Plant in Abilene is scheduled to be completed in late 2024. A milk processing plant in San Antonio to support H-E-B is under construction and scheduled to be completed in summer 2025, and Phase 1 of a Lubbock-based Leprino Foods cheese plant is scheduled to be completed in early 2026.

But the biggest help could come with the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids bill, passed in the U.S. House of Representatives with overwhelming

bipartisan support in December. If the bill clears the U.S. Senate, it will return the use of whole milk in schools and greatly increase demand.

Overall, the dairy industry has seen positive trends nationwide as dairy product consumption increased from 538 pounds to 655 pounds from 2022 to 2023.

## Technology continues to change dairies

Dairies across Texas are looking at technology more and more to help mitigate the ups and downs of market prices and higher costs. Technology ranging from health monitors to rumination collars are available to help producers manage cow production, and some dairies are integrating robotics to address labor shortages.

“It’s a large investment and learning curve for dairy producers, but if we face more labor shortages or rising minimum wages, these alternative technologies become worth the investment,” Spencer said. “Also, as the next generation of dairy owners move into leadership positions, they are more receptive to adapting the newer technologies.”

Another option dairy operators are looking at to help their bottom line is utilizing more beef-on-dairy breeding. Spencer said sexed semen allows dairy producers to maintain consistent replacement heifer numbers, so producers are looking to take advantage of the higher beef market. A crossed beef-on-dairy calf is valued higher, about \$200 per calf at market versus \$20 for a pure dairy calf.

“We also may see more dairy producers delve into keeping more of their beef-on-dairy calves and raising them to 800 pounds or so before selling them off,” she said. “Dairies are becoming more versatile.”





# How to Contact: Agriculture Organizations

## Gray County AgriLife Extension

12125 E. Frederic, Pampa, TX 79065  
806-669-8033  
gray-tx@tamu.edu

## Farm Service Agency

12125 E. Frederic, Pampa, TX, 79065  
806-665-1751

## Gray County Soil and Water Conservation District

12125 E. Frederic, Suite B, Pampa, TX 79065-1525  
806-665-1751  
graycounty@swcd.texas.gov

## Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District

201 W. 3rd, White Deer, TX, 79097  
806-883-2501  
info@pgcd.us

## Gray County Appraisal District

815 N. Sumner, Pampa, TX, 79065  
806-665-0791  
infor@graycad.org

## Gray County Game Warden-Coby Sanders

806-683-6205

## Gray County Wildlife Biologist-Chadd Malone

806-663-6148  
chadd.malone@tpwd.texas.gov

## Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner-Sid Miller

6407 S. Highway 377, Stephenville, TX 76401  
254-968-3535  
texasagriculture.gov  
campaign@sidmiller.com

## USDA Texas State Coordinator-Floyd Nauls

254-742-9948  
floyd.nauls@usda.gov

## Gray County Buyers Club-Ryan Davis

PO Box 853, Pampa, TX, 79066  
806-886-8118  
graycountybuyersclub@gmail.com

## Gray County FFA Chapter-Alan Parker

111 E. Harvester, Pampa, TX, 79065  
806-669-4800 ext. 1133  
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## Texas FFA Association

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## Gray County 4-H

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## Clarendon College Agriculture Division-Johnny Treichel

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