

2023 NYFEA INSTITUTE – BRYAN COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

Nine PYFA members and two students attended the 2023 NYFEA Institute December 6-10 at Texas A&M University in Bryan College Station, Texas. Texas Young Farmers planned and organized many great tour stops and speakers for the 175 attendees from across the nation.

The Institute began Wednesday afternoon with the delegates meeting where 2024 NYFEA officers were nominated and programs and finances were reviewed. PYFA delegates were Denise Leydig and Glenn and Linda Krall. Dinner was on our own, while some attendees visited Santa's Wonderland light show and entertainment venue.

Thursday's tour began at the Texas A&M (TAMU) O.D. Butler Animal Science Complex where researchers raise Beefmaster and Red Angus cattle which are suited to the hot climate. TAMU has 1600 animal science students who study here.



Next we visited the TAMU pecan orchard, established in 1952, which contains thirty varieties of pecan trees. The manager demonstrated how the trees are mechanically shaken to drop the nuts, which are then picked up by a special machine, then sorted and sent to a facility for shelling. The pecan orchard is self-funded by donations, grants, and nut sales.





The TAMU Horticulture Research Center was the site for our jumbo hot dog lunch, followed by a delicious visit to the Blue Bell Creamery in nearby Brenham, TX, where everyone sampled the product and viewed the ice cream-making from the observation deck.

The afternoon stop was Texas Agriculture Aviation where the owner gave us a crop dusting demonstration. They spray for pests on cotton, sorghum, small grains, and grasses, as well as seeding ryegrass. Spraying operations are busy from March through December, with each of their two small planes flying about 400 hours per year.



Buses then traveled back to the College Station Visitors Center where members enjoyed a delicious dinner of beef fajitas and a program presented by the Brazos Valley Cattle Women's Association and Texas Beef Council. Texas legislature recently passed Proposition 1, a right-to-farm bill to protect normal farming practices from the growing suburban population. Beef recipes and information can be found at www.BeeflovingTexans.com.



Friday's tours began at Producers Cooperative, a huge co-op of thousands of Texas farmers. The Co-op operates a large retail store and sells bulk and bagged feeds, seed, and fertilizers.

Next we visited TransOva Genetics for an in-depth look at embryo transfer and in-vitro fertilization. This company has over 400 employees in locations across the U.S. and soon to be international. They began working with IVF in the 1990s and also work in cloning cattle, sheep, goats and swine.



A hallowed site on the Texas A&M campus is the Bonfire Memorial. Two students gave us a guided tour and explained that a longstanding tradition at the University was the building of a giant bonfire leading up to the game with rival the University of Texas. In 1999 this bonfire pile collapsed, killing 12 and injuring 27. The bonfire tradition ended that year, but annual ceremonies are held at the site.



Lunch was enjoyed at the iconic Dixie Chicken in College Station—not chicken, but hamburgers! Next we visited the George Bush Presidential Library and gravesites of George and Barbara. The

museum portrayed a history of the Bushes' lives and happenings in the U.S. and the world during his Presidency.

The day wrapped up with shopping and dinner on our own in the town of Bryan, home of many unique shops and restaurants.





On Saturday we heard from three speakers who talked about Texas agriculture and how to encourage youth to enter the many career opportunities available in the field: (l to r) Bobby Gutierrez, Mayor of College Station; Dr. Jack Elliott, Professor and Regional Director for Africa for the Norman Borlaug Institute; and Dr. Jim

Mazurkiewicz, Director of the TALL leadership institute. They said we can't do things the same as our grandparents did; we must utilize technology and not be afraid to try new things. All speakers agreed that ag labor is the biggest issue we face, but others are availability of water and the need for unity among all types of agriculture.

Lunch followed in the stadium room at Kyle Field, where NYFEA officers for 2024 were sworn in. President- Rusty Tipton, KY; President Elect- Tommy Ketcham, TX; Secretary- Tim McSwain, SC.



The annual auction to benefit NYFEA programs was held prior to dinner at Kyle Field. Winner of the Ag Expressions contest was Jaylene Everhart of PA. Ag Communications winner was Reagan Griggs, SC, and Spokesperson is Sidney Johnson, KY; alternate Jillian Anderson of PA. Following dinner all enjoyed music by Nashville recording artist Jake Bush.



Next year's NYFEA Institute will be December 4-7, 2024 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.