

Texas Pecan Board

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Texas Pecan Board (TPB) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 16, 2025 1:30 P.M. CST
Tarleton/AgriLife Center
1225 N. US Highway 281, Stephenville, TX 76401

TPB Members Present: Zachary Swick, Troy Swift, Dennis Hardman, Mark Friesenhahn, Winston Millican, Jeffrey Ivey

Guests: TPGA Staff/TPB Contractor: Blair Krebs; Texas Department of Agriculture: Patrick Dudley, Kat Neilson; Tarleton State University, Jean Lonie-Dudley; Texas A&M AgriLife: Kyle Slusher, Jonathan Consford (by phone); James Livergood, Mary Santos, John Abraham, Kevin Ivey.

Texas Pecan Board (TPB) Vice President Zachary Swick called the meeting to order at 1:31 P.M. CST. President Jake Montz could not attend the meeting. Swick called the board roll call, establishing a quorum, and asked guests to introduce themselves.

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) representative Patrick Dudley swore in the newly elected Texas Pecan Board member, Jeffrey Ivey, who filled the board member position vacated by Joseph Massey. Blair Krebs noted as a new board member, Ivey would need to complete the public information and open meeting trainings and send the certificates to TPB and TDA. Krebs also noted there will not be another elections cycle until 2026. The board also discussed the issue of TPB board members not regularly attending the meetings. Members in attendance noted they would speak to the missing members and address the issue further before the March meeting.

The board members reviewed the meeting minutes from the July 20, 2025 meeting in Denton. Dennis Hardman made the motion to approve the minutes. Mark Friesenhahn seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting minutes were approved.

Patrick Dudley from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) then gave an update from the department about its work, including information on bulk shipment compliance agreement, penalty matrix for pecan weevil, and regulations on the movement of pecans between Texas and Mexico. TDA Lead Grants Specialist Kat Neilson also gave an update on the Young Farmer Grant changes from the State Legislator, Specialty Crop Block, and Multi-State Grant programs.

Dr. Jean Lonie-Dudley from Tarleton State University spoke to the group about the Texas Pecan Innovation Center at Tarleton. A couple of projects they have in the works affecting Texas pecans are a Specialty Crop Block application for development of the center, other grant work done in partnership with New Mexico State University, and the possibility of having a Texas Pecan Night at a Tarleton basketball game this winter. Blair Krebs also gave updates on how their innovation work has spread to other groups, including the national programs with the NIFA-ARFI innovation grants now open to the industry, and that the group should be proud of the spark the group has given to the industry to advance innovation.

Dr. Kyle Slusher, Texas A&M AgriLife entomologist stationed in Stephenville, gave an update on his program and the requested needs for his research. Dr. Slusher presented a possible budget and pecan orchard layout he came up with that would be needed to revive or plant a new research orchard for pecan entomology research work. Mark Friesenhahn asked if Slusher would also create a research plan, so they

have a better idea of the benefits associated with the work Slusher could do. Others also asked if he would work with producers to get a better idea of a budget for the orchard project. With more information needed, Zachary Swick made the motion to have Dennis Hardman, as lead, and Winston Millican have a working group to evaluate the options as far as costs and logistics to create a research plot for Dr. Slusher's work. The working group would then come back to the TPB President and Vice President with their findings, and would have up to \$40,000 designated to create the research plot. Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion passed.

The group then moved to the agenda item to review TPB financials and activities. TPB contractor Blair Krebs went over the 2024-2025 year-end financials, noting the budget would be handled later in the meeting. Krebs reported on some cost saving measures such as multi-year plans that saved on the website and insurance. She also noted that the organization's structure would not allow any investment funds into an Ameriprise account, so the group would look for other options. With no further discussion Winston Millican made motion to approve the 2024-2025 year-end financials. Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion passed. Blair Krebs also gave an update on the activities for the organization. She informed the group about administrative, grant, and infrastructure work the team had been handling, including an update on marketing projects, innovation efforts, weevil containment efforts, and international marketing with grant funding.

The next agenda item was a continuation of a previous discussion to define TPB activities priorities and focus for the organization. At the July meeting there was discussion and Blair Krebs offered three possible focused activities of marketing, research, and regulatory. A working group comprised of Mark Friesenhahn, Jeffrey Ivey, and Troy Swift were assigned to take a look at the options and bring more details to the March meeting.

Discussion then moved to possible action on a marketing proposal to create a Texas Pecan Brand and associate materials. Blair Krebs presented the powerpoint proposal provided by the marketing company with several options to choose from. After reviewing the options on what would be the best option to promote Texas pecans, Winston Millican made the motion to move forward with the proposal to create a brand development and LSM kit for the \$94,500 estimate. The kit would give producers and retailers the tools to promote Texas pecans. Dennis Hardman seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Blair Krebs noted she will begin the work with the marketing agency and try to negotiate the price down. Board members noted they would like to review the HEB marketing piece again in March and for handouts of the work to be provided to the industry.

The rolling agenda item of Texas Pecan Board compliance, audit expectations, and procedures led by Patrick Dudley and Jake Montz had no update and with the current industry dynamics, they do not see a next step. Therefore, this agenda item can be removed for the next meeting.

The next agenda item about the suspected weevil finding in El Paso County was discussed, as the isolated finding had now been confirmed by Texas AgriLife Specialists, Jonathan Consford and Kyle Slusher. Blair Krebs noted that with the recent finding, the group is working on creating protocol and orchard compliance agreement. Kyle Slusher gave an update to the group on the finding and work being done on the protocol. Guest Kevin Ivey presented a compliance agreement a group in El Paso put together for the orchard and cleaning plant owners. Blair Krebs recommended they notify the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) as the state organization, which she would do immediately. Krebs would then try to setup a meeting with the necessary TDA teams, Kyle Slusher, Kevin Ivey, and any other needed industry members in Austin to review the protocols from Texas AgriLife and compliance agreements. The group then hopes to have TDA out to El Paso to meet with more producers. Once the protocols and agreements are finalized, they will be sent out to the board members and industry.

The board then moved to the discussion on additional counties to monitor if pecan weevil is present, like the actions taken in Pecos County. Previous monitoring activities had removed Pecos from the pecan weevil quarantine in Texas, but New Mexico has not agreed and wants inspections of cleaning plants. AgriLife Specialist Jonathan Consford has been working with New Mexico representatives and is just waiting for the final stamp of approval from New Mexico for the procedures. From there they would start checking cleaning plants in Pecos and Reeves Counties so any current or future quarantine removal will be recognized by New Mexico. Monitoring and trapping work in Reeves County, funded by TPB, started this summer with weevil traps put out in August. No weevil has been found so far, but some trees are not bearing. Both Slusher and Consford worked on the effort with the Reeves county agent.

The discussion moved to research being done on pecan weevil by the USDA-ARS team of entomologists and funded by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and Texas Pecan Board. Blair Krebs noted they finally received instructions on sending payment after signing the agreement a while ago. The \$75,000 payment was sent at the beginning of September and will be reflected in the 2025-2026 financials. Krebs also relayed the message from ARS team lead Dr. Lindsey Perkin, that more samples of weevil are needed from Texas and she has the kits to collect them. The weevil samples will not only help identify the pests' origins, but also how they move and how far they can move.

The next agenda item covered looking at additional research. Blair Krebs had suggested allocating a set budget each year to additional research projects. Krebs suggested having a grant like system where applications are submitted by researchers and awarded each year. TPGA will be voting on a similar system. Troy Swift made the motion to create the program and protocol to address the research needs of Texas pecan growers and offer research funding each year. Winston Millican amended the motion to include \$10,000 a year in the TPB budget for this program. Dennis Hardman seconded the amended motion, all voted in favor, and the motion passed. A working group of Troy Swift as lead, Winston Millican, Mark Friesenhahn, and Jeffrey Ivey was set to lead the work and review proposals before they go to the entire board of directors. Blair Krebs will work to help outline the protocol and program.

The TPB 2025-2026 proposed budget was reviewed, with the additional items approved during this meeting and totaling \$264,700 in expenditures for promotion, research, and administrative work. Winston Millican made the motion to accept the budget with the additional funding outlined during this meeting. Dennis Hardman seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the budget was approved.

The last agenda item addressed future Texas Pecan Board meetings for 2026. Blair Krebs noted she will be looking at dates and hope to send them out before the end of the year for all three meetings. The March meeting will be in College Station to meet with research and extension representatives, the July meeting will be in San Marcos in conjunction with the TPGA Conference, and the September meeting will likely be at the APC/APPB office in Dallas.

With no further agenda items or business, Troy Swift made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Mark Friesenhahn seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting was adjourned about 5:18 P.M. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Krebs