



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Commissioner

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A HOLIDAY MESSAGE  
by Rick Perry  
Texas Commissioner of Agriculture  
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The constantly blinking cursor on my blank computer screen is like an alarm clock, ticking off the seconds of the day, as this year winds down to a close and this generation takes one step closer to the turn of the century.

But in the middle of the hustle and bustle of this holiday season and in between phone calls and appointments, I want to take some time and share with you some thoughts about holidays, families and progress.

Like youngsters everywhere, my son and daughter, Griffin and Sydney, look forward to the holiday season. Their best behavior is worn as comfortably as their favorite winter coats when they go outside to play. Last night at home, when I listened to their laughter as they helped their mother bake holiday cookies, I smiled to myself, knowing that I had been richly rewarded with a happy, loving family.

This got me to thinking about our extended agricultural family around the state, and I smiled to myself, knowing that I -- like so many Texans -- have been richly blessed by the hard work

of producers across Texas who put food on our tables and clothes in our closets.

Agriculture is an industry that takes care of people through its people. And while balancing checkbooks and ledgers is important to the bottom line of any business, the wealth of agriculture -- its people -- is what makes this industry great.

Whether they're plowing a cotton field on the High Plains or managing a broiler operation in East Texas, the people involved in Texas agriculture provide the foundation and support that has sustained this industry for generations.

There's a sense of family and community spirit among the folks who tend the livestock and raise the crops. And it's the untiring efforts of these kindred spirits that make Texas the second leading agricultural producer in America.

Our agricultural industry contributed mightily to the Texas economy during 1991 with sales totaling more than \$12 billion. In fact, Texas agriculture generates more than \$36 billion in economic activity across the state and one in every five jobs.

Talk about planting seeds and harvesting opportunities! And that's exactly what Texas producers have been doing for generations -- planting the seeds of progress and change.

To people who aren't involved in agriculture, the progress may not be evident, because this past year I've heard a lot of people say that agriculture is in a state of decline, that the industry has lost its drive and incentive. Of course, thanks to Mother Nature, not every producer has had a good year.

But even so, I say that agriculture is not in a state of decline but in a state of dynamic change. And in my trips around the state this past year, I have seen the enthusiasm and felt the spirit that prevails among our agricultural family.

This spirit has ignited a spark of agricultural projects and businesses that are creating jobs and economic growth in communities across the state. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What we call results are beginnings." Change means opportunities, and truly, the economic opportunities we have helped create this past year are just the beginning of a new horizon on the Texas agricultural landscape -- a new horizon that offers hope and promise.

That would be my wish for each of you this holiday season. A holiday season that is filled with the bounty from our land.

A holiday season filled with the joys of family and community; a holiday season filled with excitement and expectations; and a holiday season filled with the anticipation that only a bright future holds.

Anita and I want to wish everyone in our Texas agricultural family and throughout our great state the best during the holiday season and a prosperous new year.

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