

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE COUNCIL



SOUTH TEXAS COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE THINK CO-OPS: THEY CAN BE A RISK-REDUCER

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2022, OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

6:30 p.m. Convention Welcome & Shrimp Boil – Bayview Room, Omni Corpus Christi Hotel

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

8:00 a.m. Registration

8:30 a.m. Welcome – Emcee, **April Graves**, TACC President & Controller, United Ag Co-op, El Campo

8:40 a.m. “The Long Term Motivation of Farmers: Can They Survive in an Uncertain World?” – **Kevin Brinkley**, CEO, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, Lubbock

Co-ops have provided their members with marketing tools that provide a safe harbor during storms caused by volatility. Weather, geopolitics, and outside market forces are leading some growers to ask what are the solutions of the future? Are changes in demographics, economic growth, and consumer preferences enough motivation to take the risks required to farm? Kevin will explore today’s economic landscape and factors to consider in the next five years and beyond.

9:20 a.m. “The Legacy Project: A Look Into the Future of Cooperatives” – **Rocky Weber**, CEO Nebraska Co-op Council, Lincoln, NE

The planning committee for this conference requested that this be a must-see presentation! Recognizing that only a handful of significant co-ops remained in the state, the Nebraska co-op leadership requested a year’s-long study be conducted to examine repercussions from this dynamic. The result yielded many surprises, so much so that this particular presentation has caught the attention of numerous other statewide co-op leadership groups. This presentation has a little co-op 101 in it, strategies all co-ops can examine to remain viable, looks at age & leadership diversity, & also contains a few surprises. All in all, a very interesting presentation! Prior to becoming CEO of the statewide co-op council in his state, he & his firm handled nearly all co-op law in Nebraska.

10:35 a.m. Break

10:50 a.m. "Attracting Ag Labor: A Success Story Since 1989" – **Lee Wicker**, CEO, North Carolina Growers Association, Vass, NC

You are in for a real treat with this guy. He serves as CEO of the largest user of the ag "guest worker" program in the nation AND it is a COOPERATIVE! In the early 1980s, worker shortage was huge in North Carolina with it being the #1 producer of sweet potatoes in the U.S., 2nd largest producer of Christmas trees, and 3rd in strawberries. They formed the organization to recruit H2A workers from around the world to aid farmers in fulfilling their profession. It has now become quite a success story. They have survived the struggles, the labor union lawsuits, & other grief associated with the labor market, but they endured! He is here to tell the good, the bad, and the ugly of his venture. It may be an example we can all learn from.

11:40 a.m. Lunch and Program:
"Welcoming Remarks" – **Dr. Shad D. Nelson**, Dean, Dick & Mary Lewis Kleberg College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Texas A&M Kingsville, Kingsville

The latest college to enter the TACC Summer Co-op Internship program is Texas A&M Kingsville and they have provided some exceptional candidates. With that, we are honored to have Dr. Shad Nelson, the Dean of the College of Agriculture at A&M Kingsville, join us for our morning program and bring us a few greetings at lunch. The university provides a tremendous pipeline of worthy students in agriculture.

"Regional Economic Update: Texas Eyes Soft Landing As Growth Slows" – **Jesus Cañas**, Senior Business Economist, Federal Reserve Board, Dallas

We consider ourselves lucky to tap into & have available one of the most articulate, gifted, and admired individuals when discussing the economy. He will review some of the market signals to be watching for regarding cost of goods & services, interest rate changes, and commodity prices and when such actions may be occurring. On the surface, it may not appear to be the most appropriate topic for an entertaining luncheon, but you may be in for a huge surprise!

1:15 p.m. "Spotlighting the Most Notable Legal Challenges Facing Cooperatives" – **Gary McLaren**, Attorney, McLaren Law Firm, Lubbock

Some come to this session for entertainment value. Some come to see the latest red flag legal challenges in cooperatives. But most say they come to this session for BOTH. He is this most celebrated co-op attorney in the Southwest and his presentation skills are beyond description. Always known to receive some of the highest marks of any speaker because of his insight, his intelligence, and his simple presentation skills. He's back for more!

2:00 p.m. "Board Governance: It's Expanded Beyond Roles & Duties" -- **Dr. John Park**, Roy B. Davis Chair in Agricultural Cooperation, Texas A&M University, College Station

Research shows that strong board governance is essential for co-ops to survive, yet co-ops have lacked the data that is needed to benchmark their governance practices ----- until now! A recent nationwide survey, with responses from over 500 different cooperatives, had some interesting takes, capturing substantial information. Seven key findings were revealed. Texas A&Ms Dr. John Park will break it all down and share his takeaways from the study and what it can mean to each of us.

2:45 p.m. Summary and Conclusion

