

Commissioner Todd Staples
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1-800-TELL-TDA
www.tda.state.tx.us

For Immediate Release:
June 23, 2008

Contacts: Bryan Black
Veronica Obregon
(512) 463-7664

NEW RESTAURANT PROGRAM OFF TO A SIZZLING START

Commissioner Staples, Driskill Chef Highlight Benefits, Encourage More Texas Eateries to Become GO TEXAN Members

AUSTIN – Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples today announced that, only four months after its inauguration, the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program has reached a milestone of 274 members. Commissioner Staples made the announcement at the Driskill Grill in the historic the Driskill Hotel.

“These initial members recognize the importance of serving up their entrees with a side of Texas pride,” Commissioner Staples said. “When GO TEXAN Restaurant Program members connect with area producers to serve locally grown, seasonal products, the consumer enjoys the freshest ingredients possible and the state’s economy is strengthened.”

The new GO TEXAN Restaurant Program allows restaurants to join the GO TEXAN marketing program, the Texas Department of Agriculture’s comprehensive campaign promoting the products, culture and communities of Texas. The innovative program encourages restaurants to use locally produced items, which not only recognizes Lone Star State quality but also — in this time of rising fuel and food prices — helps control costs by keeping transportation distances to a minimum. The Driskill Hotel is one of the program’s newest members.

“Having the oldest established restaurant in Austin, it’s only natural for the Driskill to embrace the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program that connects our culinary staff with local growers and producers,” Executive Chef Jonathan Gelman said. “At both the Driskill Grill and the 1886 Café & Bakery, we carefully select products and prepare menus that provide our guests with fresh, innovative cuisine that reflects the diverse food traditions of our city and state. With this program, the Texas Department of Agriculture has shortened the distance and reduced the amount of time that it takes to get the food from farm to table.”

For a \$25 annual fee, members receive assistance in sourcing locally produced items; use of the GO TEXAN brand on menus and other printed materials; and inclusion in high-profile events, publications and other activities promoting member establishments to the public.

Chefs and restaurateurs across the state noted the value of the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program.

- “It’s quite simple why I joined the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program: to help close the gap between our restaurants and the grass-roots farmers who are producing the finest, freshest ingredients available. We want to showcase to our customers why we’re so proud of our local farmers!”
— Jason Dady, chef/owner of The Lodge Restaurant of Castle Hills, BIN 555 Restaurant and Wine Bar, and TRE Trattoria, San Antonio
- “I was excited to hear about the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program because I have always strived to buy local, seasonal products at home, and now I am able to incorporate this commitment into my professional life as well. Whether I’m visiting the farmer’s market on weekends or forming a partnership with a Gulf fisherman, I love that I can do my part to save the environment and support local suppliers while still providing our guests with the freshest, most flavorful ingredients out there.”
— Todd Duplechan, chef de cuisine at TRIO at Four Seasons Hotel, Austin
- “I like most all things ‘Texas’ and appreciate what TDA does to promote Texas and her products. I appreciate a program that points specifically to the Texas restaurant industry and those of us who spend our days there.”
— John Cagle, owner of Cagle Steaks, Lubbock

Make sure to mark your calendars for Oct. 1, 2008. On this day consumers will be invited to dine at GO TEXAN Restaurant Program establishments, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting food banks across Texas. Look for more information later this year about this exciting event.

For details about the GO TEXAN Restaurant Program or to inquire about membership, go to www.gotexan.org or contact Sarah Riggins at (512) 475-1663 or sarah.riggins@tda.state.tx.us.

###

All TDA press releases are also available via the Internet at www.tda.state.tx.us.