

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Strategic Plan

The “College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Strategic Plan” task force has had two meetings since the last report (April 20, 26) with our next meeting scheduled for May 4. Task force member homework after the March 29 meeting was to conduct an individual SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) analysis for each of the six TAMU plan priorities related to our college, plus additional reflections unique to COALS. At our April 20 meeting, each member discussed what they wrote and we further brainstormed ideas. This was then combined into a seven page draft strategic plan which we briefly discussed April 26. A major concern was that this draft strategic plan only represents a very narrow slice (six) of our thousands of identified stakeholders so far. We thus needed to determine how we would better gather input before we started to loose faculty and students for the summer. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of gathering input using a survey versus a forum based on what we learned from our task force’s preliminary SOAR analysis. We also discussed making the current document available for people to publicly edit (deemed a novel and transparent idea, but also very risky due to potential monopolization and a complete re-writing by a small group of individuals). We determined that an open forum would be best, and that we should hold this before the end of the semester. We tentatively plan to then use the input gained for a survey that might rank priorities later in the summer – but we also want to have the plan finalized before the new fiscal year, August 31 if at all possible.

For the forums, we plan to have two 3.5 hour forums divided into the seven sections of our draft strategic plan that that ask questions like “What do you love about the college?” and “What opportunities do you wish you had in the college?” The two forums will occur between May 17 and May 28. We plan for there to be two so that hopefully everyone who wants to participate will be able to. There will be seven sections, each 30 minutes, that will follow the TAMU strategic plan: ENHANCE transformational education and student success; ELEVATE graduate and professional education; STRENGTHEN and harness our research enterprise; GROW and support our world-class faculty; BE A BEST PLACE to live, work, and learn; ENGAGE Texas and beyond to enhance our impact; and finally, Considerations unique to COALS. Each section will be led by a task force member and supported by another task force member. The entire COALS community will be invited but preregistration will be required to provide registrants with background material, to have a contact email for any follow-up interactions, to make sure everyone was able to provide their input as well as to prevent Zoom bombing. We will further discuss the specific questions and format at our May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## Report 2 – April 28

# Promotion Guidance for College Academic Professional Track

The task force had four meetings (April 6, 15, 21, 28) in this month regarding *Promotion Guidance for College Academic Professional Track*. The task force moved forward with the charge as outlined at <https://agrilife.tamu.edu/task-force-committees/promotion-guidance-for-college-academic-professional-track/> throughout April. We reviewed the charge during our weekly meetings to help us focus our discussions and approaches at addressing the charge.

Our team brainstormed potential questions to our audiences from April 6<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>. The task force decided to utilize a Qualtrics instrument to gather input and assist with data analysis in constructing our deliverable. To date, our team has developed a twenty-four-item mixed-methods Qualtrics instrument to collect data from the aforementioned audiences as input to construct our deliverable. The instrument, we believe based on our internal tests, will take no more than 15 minutes. The task force identified four audiences to gather input and recommendations to the document outlined in our charge:

1. College APT faculty
2. Department Heads
3. Department P&T chairs
4. Associate Department Heads
5. AgriLife Promotion and Tenure Committee

Our task force will distribute our data collection instrument the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>. We anticipate collecting responses from our identified audiences through May 11<sup>th</sup>. We will also continue to focus on our charge identified on the website at each weekly task force meeting to meet our deliverable and be efficient. This task force has worked as a collegial team throughout the process to accomplish their charge.

Our next task force meeting is **Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>** from 2-3pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Strong Jr.

## Report 2 – April

# College Policies for Graduate Education

The “College Policies for Graduate Education” task force has had two additional meetings since our last report (April 1, 21) with our next meeting scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>. On the April 1 meeting we discussed breaking the charge into a questionnaire to ask departments (likely Associate Heads and/or Advisors) to obtain data and share best practices to guide our policy recommendations. We broke this up into seven areas each with a task force lead: General Information Gathering (existing department reports); Student Recruitment and Retention, and Time to Degree; Graduate Student Success and Productivity; Student Future Employment; Stipend Levels; Fellowships and Offer Letters; Funding Commitments in Offer Letters and “4-year packages”; Allocation of Teaching Assistantships and Graduate Student Instructors-of-Record; and Financial Sustainability of Graduate Programs. These areas including both quantitative and open-ended questions, were deemed important but edited to reduce Departments reporting burden, we also coordinated so that we would not need to go back to the Departments. This was nearly finalized by our April 21 meeting, once it was finalized it was to be ‘sanity checked’ by one Department and then distributed to Departments with a goal of requesting answers to our questions within two to four weeks. It was determined that even under the best case scenario we could not get the results back from Departments and interpreted before many faculty and students start leaving for summer. We needed a different plan to meaningfully engage stakeholders before the break (but still plan to distribute our questionnaire to the Departments before summer.

We determine a town hall where we solicit input on what people think works well in COALS graduate education would be the best strategy. The goal is two fold 1) For participants to share their enthusiasm on what is working well in various departments for graduate education so that other departments can learn from and consider applying those practices, thus improving graduate education overall in COALS; 2) To inform any future College’s Policies for graduate education. It is anticipated that all stakeholders in COALS graduate education will be invited: Faculty (Junior and Senior), Academic Heads, Graduate students (Current, Alumni), Academic Advisors, OGAPS, Employers, Center for Teaching Excellence, etc. To ensure maximum participation we will hold these two hour town halls on two different dates. “What works well in Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Graduate Education? – a Town Hall” Thursday, May 13 – 2pm to 3pm; Friday May 14 10am to noon. We hope to refine our questions at the May 4 meeting.

## Report 2 – April 28

# Youth Development in AgriLife

The *Youth Development in AgriLife* task force had four meetings this month (April 7th, 14th, 21th, 28th). The task force has had a lot of discussions in regards to developing an options report for better administration and coordination of AgriLife youth development programs.

We continued our work in April to internally examine and document existing AgriLife youth development efforts to meet our Inventory charge at <https://agrilife.tamu.edu/task-force-committees/youth-development-in-agrilife/>.

This task force has split into subcommittees to more efficiently answer our options report deliverable. Those subcommittees include:

1. Instrument development
2. Options report
3. Inventory of AgriLife youth development efforts

The input gathered from the instrument will inform our options report deliverable. Data collection is planned to begin the week of May 10th. The Inventory will be constructed for task force review, ideally, by May 15th. It is anticipated that the options report and inventory will be refined during the week of May 24th. The final versions of each are expected to be shared with the Dean by May 31st.

Our next task force meeting is **Wednesday, May 5th** from 3-4pm in which our team will review the data collection instrument and initial formatting of the options report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Strong Jr.

## Report 2 - April

# COALS Individualized Major in the College

Since the last report the task force has met four times (April 2, 16, 22, 27) to discuss a “COALS individualized Major in the College”. April 2, the task force examined colleges and universities with existing “choose your own major” programs to get an idea of how other schools have tackled this; although many smaller schools have such programs, the only peer identified was the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. This demonstrated there is some precedent but also that it is not too late to offer leadership in creating such a program. Our next step was to divide into two groups that 1) drafted a straw proposal of what this major might look like or 2) drafted case studies of potential students who might desire such a program. April 16 and 22 we discussed these and determined that there are unmet needs in attracting outstanding students that such a program could be designed to fill (some examples include students interested in bioremediation, agricultural policy, farm/ranch management, urban agriculture, agricultural data science, etc.). We also determined that there are many details that need to be fleshed out and that we are running up against the end of the school year, where we expect to have less access to university stakeholders. It was determined that we need to meet with the Heads and Associate Heads of all Departments soon to present our draft case (~30 minutes), ask them some clarifying questions (~30 minutes), have an open discussion (~30 minutes) and hopefully get their buy-in as to the potential value. Two 1.5 hour meetings have been scheduled (May 18 and May 24) so that we hopefully can get most Department representatives to attend and provide input at one session. At our April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting we turned our attention to crafting learning outcomes, critical for such a major, and formulating the questions we will ask to the Departments. The learning outcomes will mostly be designed by the students but must address some of the seven TAMU learning outcomes; we anticipate that these will be assessed using a number of direct and indirect measures across the program. A major concern so far among the task force is the amount of faculty and/or advisor contact time the flexibility of this new major could require. The other major concern is that we need to have this to UPC by October to get to Faculty Senate by December. We therefore anticipate presenting a well fleshed out plan to the faculty of the college and other stakeholders as soon as school resumes in August.

**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**APRIL 30, 2021**

**TASK FORCE 6: TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH STRATEGIC PLAN**

**MEMBERS:**

Rick Vierling, Brent Auvermann, David Stelly, David Baltensperger, Debra Cummings, Rebecca Seguin-Fowler, Clare Gill, Cliff Lamb, Roel Lopez, Carl Muntean, Marco Palma, Elizabeth Parker, Elsa Murano, David Ragsdale, David Stelly, Max Sturdicant, Josh Wand, Angela Bailey, Juan Landivar (Chair).

**Activities planned for April 2021 :**

1. Complete revisions of the questionnaire and alternative answers for each question of both, the internal and external surveys.
2. The Complete revisions of the new roadmap for AgriLife Research (vision, mission, and base-strategies).
3. Communicate activities of Task force 6 to the chairs of other Task Forces.

**Activities accomplished in April 2021.**

In April, the entire group met twice. Subgroups also met as needed to complete assignments.

1. Develop an internal survey questionnaire with the objective of obtaining information from AgriLife faculty at COALS departments, Research and Extension Centers and institutes, graduate students, and staff to define the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats (SWOT) for AgriLife-Research.

This subcommittee met four times during the month of April. These team opted for developing a list of predefined options for each question, including the option to type alternative answers and comments not included in the main list. Revised internal survey is listed in appendix 1.

2. Revise the existing Vision and Mission statements for AgriLife Research and revise the existing list of priorities to develop a new list to serve as a base to build upon.

**Revised Vision and Mission Statement**

- ***Vision***  
Healthy lives and livelihoods improved through abundant, affordable, and high quality food and agricultural products in Texas, and the world.

- **Mission**  
Create, learn, and share knowledge about agriculture and the life sciences that nourishes health, strengthens our communities, protects our natural resources, and supports our economies

**Revised list of Research Priorities.**

- Priority One: *Discover new innovations, technologies, and science-based solutions to enhance agricultural and ecological systems, and the life sciences.*
  - Priority Two: *Provide the translational research necessary for the development and production of high-quality, safe, and sustainable food and fiber systems with local, national, and global impact.*
  - Priority Three: *Enhance the efficiency, profitability and resiliency of agriculture, natural resources, and food systems in the state of Texas and the world.*
  - Priority Four: *Discover, disseminate, and facilitate adoption of scientific evidence at the intersection of nutrition, human health, and agriculture.*
3. Coordinate activities with other task forces.

Communicate/meet with chair of other task forces. Agree to continue communication and share information as needed.

A videoconference was held with Dr. Robert Strong to coordinate Youth Training

**Activities planned for May 2021 :**

1. ***Final revisions of the options for each question for both, the internal and external surveys. Complete no later than May 10<sup>th</sup>.***
2. ***Develop survey instrument for both, Internal and External Survey. Complete by May 28<sup>th</sup>***
3. ***Develop Text describing scope of revised roadmap for AgriLife Research (vision, mission, and base-strategies), Complete by May 10<sup>th</sup>***
4. ***Developed text on Texas Economy and competitive advantages of AgriLife. Complete by May 10<sup>th</sup>***
5. ***Develop scheme and work plan for implementing an Adaptive Strategic Planning: Complete by May 21<sup>st</sup>***
6. **Communicate activities of Task force 6 to the chairs of other Task Forces.**

The chair thanks the valuable contributions of Ms. Stephanie Klock, Cathy Cardwell (Texas A&M AgriLife-Corpus Christi) and Ms. Angela Bailey in the preparation, distribution of documents and organizing meetings for this group.

## **Appendix 1.**

### ***Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Internal Survey:***

***Note: This questionnaire will be revised/edited once more by all members of the task force.***

The guidelines below are in no way meant to be all inclusive, please feel free to expand the questions as you prepare your SWOT. Be specific and focus on tangible items but some attributes may be intangible. Critical and honest evaluation is always the most insightful.

#### **Strengths** of AgriLife Research.

Strengths describe the positive attributes internal to your organization. They are within your control and offer a competitive advantage.

- **What advantages does AgriLife Research have?**
  - Multidisciplinary faculty
  - Capabilities to conduct research in diverse environments
  - Strong basic and applied research departments, centers, and institutes
  - Recognized leaders in life sciences research
  - Research and Extension centers strategically located throughout the state
  - Bigdata bases on agriculture systems
  - Research outcomes directly benefits stakeholders
  - Strong cooperation/feedback from stakeholders
  - Other, please specify
  
- **What do we do better than anyone else?**
  - Land use, conservation tillage
  - Food and Nutrition
  - Sustainability, cropping systems
  - Water efficiency, conservation
  - Insect-vectored diseases
  - Disease prevention in crops and animals
  - Bioenergy
  - Cultivar development
  - Pest and invasive plants control
  - Livestock and plant genetics
  - International partnerships

- Other, please specify
- **What do you do well?**
  - Active grants program
  - Mentoring junior faculty
  - Mentoring graduate students and undergraduate interns.
  - Collaborative research programs within area of expertise
  - Multidisciplinary research teams
  - Team player promote teamwork.
  - Publish work in high impact journals.
  - Other, please specify.
- **What internal resources do you have? Think about the following:**
  - ***Positive personal attributes***
    - Recognized as an expert in my field
    - Integrator of information
    - Breadth, depth, and variety of experience
    - Ability and willingness to develop a transdisciplinary network of research and grant collaborative teams
    - Relationships with industry and private companies.
    - Technical skills to complement my work (computer skills, statistics).
    - Proactive, nimble, and adaptive to changing needs
    - Other, please specify.
  - ***Tangible assets***
    - Successful grant program
    - Excellent work infrastructure
    - Develop basic research that addresses the priorities of agriculture and life sciences'
    - Innovator develop patentable technology.
    - Integrate systems and technology into models or applications.
    - Conduct applied research and engage with producers and/or the private sector
    - Other, please specify.
- **What other internal resources add value or offer a competitive advantage?**  
Please list additional internal resources.

## Weaknesses

Weaknesses are aspects of that detract from the value you offer or place you at a competitive disadvantage. You need to enhance these areas to compete with your best competitor.

- **What could AgriLife improve?**

- Mentoring Junior faculty in program management
  - Mentoring Junior faculty in grantsmanship
  - Mentoring/Motivating lagging Associate Professors
  - Improve laboratory facilities
  - Reduce administrative or regulatory chores of faculty.
  - Reduce regulatory oversights.
  - Poor coordination between Research and Extension Centers
  - Increase visibility with current and incoming students.
  - Improve communication, linkage, and collaboration among faculty
  - Invest in renovations for aging infrastructure
  - Other, please specify.
- **What should AgriLife avoid doing?**
    - Allow Research and Extension to silo.
    - Allow research centers to silo
    - Increase regulatory burdens to faculty.
    - Losing sight of their core competencies
    - Disconnect with stakeholders
    - Retain unproductive faculty and staff
    - Other, please specify.
- **What is AgriLife not doing that we should?**
    - Facilitate Research/extension split appointments.
    - Create programs to recruit top graduate students.
    - Focus on the placement of graduate students.
    - Promote program and faculty in web pages
    - Improve dissemination of successful programs
    - Improve communication with stakeholders
    - Maintain a centralized database of faculty areas of expertise and excellence
    - Other, please specify.
- **What factors within your control detract from your ability to obtain or maintain a competitive edge?**
    - Funding and retaining top graduate students and postdocs.
    - Investment funds to purchase laboratory equipment.
    - Lack of focus in research priorities
    - Lack of management plans for research
    - Lack of management plans for grant opportunities
    - Lack of communication and networking to identify grant opportunities
    - Other, please specify.
- **What areas need improvement to accomplish your objectives or compete with our peer institutions?**
    - Attract and retain competitive graduate students and postdocs.

- Retain and motivate highly productive junior faculty.
- Competitive seed funding to support high-impact projects with long-term sustainability
- Encourage multidisciplinary teams to compete for large funding opportunities
- Support for the development of new technologies and patents
- Strong mentorship programs for junior faculty and emerging scholars
- Professional development opportunities for project and grant management
- Clear communication across all levels of the Agency
- Other, please specify.

## Opportunities

Opportunities are external attractive factors that represent reasons your business is likely to prosper. A useful approach when looking at opportunities is to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open any opportunities. Look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open opportunities by eliminating them.

- **What trends are you aware of? Or are likely to affect your success Opportunities for research and grants on these?**
  - Pandemics
  - Climate change
  - Catastrophic weather events (ex. tornados, hurricanes, freeze, drought)
  - The socioeconomic impacts of carbon credit markets
  - Demographic shifts
  - Social issues, political division, class divisions
  - Labor and immigration
  - The evolution of energy, renewables, and the economy
  - Other, please specify.
- **What new technologies will make an impact on our research priorities.**
  - Gene editing
  - Bigdata management
  - Remote sensing
  - Artificial intelligence
  - Soil health
  - Carbon sequestration credits
  - Human nutrition
  - Other, please specify.
- **Changes in government policy related to your field.**
  - Availability of funds for research (federal and state)
  - Budget cuts
  - Farm Bill

- Immigration and labor
  - Broadband connectivity in the agricultural supply chain
  - International trade agreements and global competitiveness
  - Government investment in infrastructure and technology to enhance competitiveness
  - Other, please specify.
- **Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, and so on.**
    - Changing demographics
    - Consumer preferences
    - Diversity in hiring and promotions.
    - Increase in chronic disease propensity, especially among vulnerable populations.
    - Increase emphasis on nutrition and diet quality.
    - Other, please specify.
- **What opportunities exist that you can benefit from?**
    - Flexible working location during catastrophic weather or pandemics
    - Collaboration with data science experts
    - Access to seed funds to enhance the competitiveness of large multidisciplinary projects
    - University funding programs (T3, X-grants, other)
    - Multidisciplinary opportunities across a wide range of expertise within the system and outside collaborators
    - Professional development opportunities to advance your career
    - Integration of research and extension to enhance the impact of programs
    - Other, please specify.
- **Is the perception of AgriLife with the public positive?**
    - Very positive
    - Somewhat positive
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat negative
    - Very negative
    - AgriLife is unknown in the public.
- **Is the perception of AgriLife with peers positive?**
    - Very positive
    - Somewhat positive
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat negative
    - Very negative
    - AgriLife is unknown among peers.

- **Has there been recent ag market growth or have there been other changes in the ag market that creates opportunities?**
  - No
  - Too little, not enough
  - Somewhat, need more.
  - Adequate
  - Please describe your answer.
  
- **What new areas of research are most likely to transform the food system?**
  - Please use the space below to provide your answer. Multiple areas are encouraged.

## **Threats**

Threats include external factors beyond your control that could place your strategy at risk. You have no control over these, but you may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur.

- **Threats that can seriously impact AgriLife?**
  - Low number of grants funded.
  - Access to suitable facilities and equipment.
  - Lack of coordination and communication among different units
  - Lack of multidisciplinary team building opportunities
  - Communication and coordination with administrators
  - Service assignments within your unit
  - Lack of coordination between research and extension
  - Partnering with Industry or technology companies
  - Budget cuts
  - Over-regulation and administrative burdens
  - Other, please specify.
  
- **What are peer intuitions doing better than AgriLife?**
  - Networking
  - Partnerships with private companies
  - Attracting and retaining faculty
  - Attracting and retaining graduate students and postdocs
  - Investing in infrastructure
  - Reducing bureaucratic and administrative burdens
  - Other, please specify.
  
- **Are standards for AgriLife Research or services changing?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Somewhat
  
- **Is changing technology threatening your position?**

- Yes
  - No
  - Somewhat
  
- **Do you have cash-flow problems?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Somewhat
  
- **What situations might threaten AgriLife's branding efforts?**
  - Fragmentation of units within AgriLife
  - Poor/outdated webpages
  - Poor communication of successful research outcomes to the public
  - Lack of engagement with stakeholders
  - Other, please specify.

## **Promotion Guidance for AgriLife Research Faculty Task Force**

### **Progress Report - April 2021**

We conducted our work through e-mail communication during the month of April and a face-to-face TEAMS meeting has been scheduled for May 3.

Task Force members discussed the process and scope of data collection and devised the following plan:

1. Contact P&T Chairs and Department Heads and seek their input on current promotion process and any limitations on the current document in serving AgriLife Research faculty career path and promotion. Selected faculty members may also be contacted if Department P&T Chairs and DH suggest.
2. Contact recently promoted faculty members and those who underwent the mid-term reviews for their input. A different set of standardized questions will be developed where each individual will have the opportunity to share their career development experience during their time in the rank and clarity/usefulness of the available information and what they felt was deficient in the current guidelines.
3. Center Directors will be contacted to seek their input.
4. Three standardized sets of questions have been formulated to survey each category (P&T Chairs and DH, Center Directors, and Recently promoted and mid-term reviewed faculty members).
5. Task Force members have been assigned with about equal number of individuals in each category to survey and solicit feedback from these individuals.
6. Survey will begin next week and expect to complete in three weeks via personal contact of each individual identified (#1-3 above).

**Progress Report**  
**April 30, 2021**

**The Thomas Ranch – AgriLife Strategic Plan Task Force 8**



**Members:**

Susan Ballabina, Rick Vierling, Brent Auvermann, Dan Hale, Andy Herring, Joshua Johnson, Darlene Locke, Summer Odom, Justin Scheiner, Chris Skaggs, Allyson Tjoelker, Billy Zanolini, Juan Landivar (Chair).

**Deliverables for the Task Force:** The task force met twice during the month of April. Five subcommittees were formed and named leaders for each group.

1. Livestock/pasture research and production – Leader Dr. Brent Auvermann
2. Viticulture/Horticulture research and production – Leader Dr. Justin Scheiner
3. Urban agriculture research – Leader Dr. Dan Hale
4. Education and outreach – Leader Dr. Billy Zanolini
5. Timberland production and research – Leader Dr. Bill Oates (TFS)

All subcommittees were asked to meet and explore opportunities to implement at the Ranch, considering that information on the assets or finances for the facilities would not be available.

### **Report from the Livestock Enterprise Subcommittee – Activity 1**

The subcommittee on livestock enterprise met by Microsoft Teams. Volunteers present for this meeting were:

- Dr. Brent Auvermann, Subcommittee Chair and Center Director, Amarillo
- Allen Homann, CEA-ANR, Grimes County
- Donnie Montemayor, DEA, District 11, Corpus Christi
- Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Assoc. Prof. and Extension Forage Specialist, Overton
- Brandon Gregson, CEA-ANR, Montgomery County
- Dr. Jason Banta, Assoc. Prof. and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Overton
- Dr. Billy Zanolini, Asst. Prof. and Ext. Spec. – Youth Livestock and Agriculture, College Station
- Dr. Jason Cleere, Assoc. Prof. and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, College Station
- Dr. Andy Herring, Riggs Professor of Animal Science, College Station
- Dr. Ron Gill, Professor and Associate Dept. Head for Extension Animal Science, College Station
- Dr. Juan Landivar, Task Force Chair and Center Director, Corpus Christi and Weslaco

The primary goal of the subcommittee was generating ideas for research, education, Extension, and outreach at the Thomas Ranch. We reached broad agreement on the following principles in addition to the individual project/program ideas:

1. To the extent possible, we need to benchmark the fiscal performance of the livestock enterprise as it currently stands. The benchmarking exercise will give us a basis for evaluating the livestock enterprise's profitability, selecting management interventions to improve fiscal performance, and evaluating changes in fiscal performance traceable to management changes.

2. Similarly, we need a comprehensive asset inventory of the livestock enterprise at Thomas Ranch.
3. A unifying theme for the livestock enterprise at Thomas Ranch, if one can be identified and articulated, will help us market the opportunities for external sponsorships, endowments, gifts, and even recurring support. One candidate theme might be holistic ranch management with special emphases on (a) the business aspect of livestock production and (b) local adaptation of ranch-management systems.
4. Successful, revenue-generating or -neutral programs already underway by AgriLife and allied organizations at the Thomas Ranch need to be continued. Those include:
  - a. In-depth beef and forage educational series and small-landowner series
  - b. Feral hog management
  - c. Norman Borlaug Youth in Agriculture Program – livestock already included, Cactus Feeders is a major sponsor already, urban connection to agriculture.
  - d. Past programs in seasonal forage systems; result demonstrations (e. g., weed and brush control); rotational grazing; optimizing grazing management to match cattle health, body condition, nutrition, and reproduction; vector and parasite management. Revenues: those needing CEUs might be willing to pay registration fees; event sponsorships; local Farm Bureau sponsorships.
5. The Thomas Ranch as a whole, not just its livestock enterprise, provides an excellent venue for AgriLife’s legislative-outreach activities, especially those involving urban officials who would benefit from a richer understanding of agriculture and who could facilitate the development of urban outreach as Mr. Thomas envisioned.

New ideas included:

6. Youth education
  - a. Agricultural awareness/Path to the Plate
  - b. Beef cattle production and nutrition
  - c. “Field to Table” programs such as that in Jefferson County – pasture preparation, harvest, rotational grazing, feedlot/finishing, slaughter, retail grocery, and dinner table.
  - d. Culinary education
  - e. “Everything but the Moo”
7. Producers and their associations
  - a. Forage Field Day like the O. D. Butler Field Day in Robertson County; add a youth track like that of the Cow-Calf Clinic, including a scholarship program. Revenues: event-by-event sponsorships (e. g., Ag Workers Mutual, Capital Farm Credit).
  - b. Soil testing and interpreting soil-test reports (NRCS)

- c. TSCRA ranch gatherings – membership updates and promotion, socials
  - d. Texas Beef Council events
  - e. NCBA Environmental Stewardship Award Program regional winner selection committee
8. Urban adults (including their children as appropriate, and TAMU Former Students)
    - a. Agrotourism – Thomas Ranch as an agricultural destination including beef/wine, culinary competitions, BBQ competitions, galas and fundraising events; partnerships with TAMU and SHSU art departments.
    - b. Bed and breakfast (idea: auction for football weekends?)
  9. University students
    - a. Prairie View beef-cattle production class, Thomas Ranch as a living laboratory
    - b. Understanding consumer preferences – meat quality (Dr. Rhonda Miller’s lab) in conjunction with oenology
  10. Public officials or aspiring leaders
    - a. Legislative aide updates
    - b. Leadership-development program
  11. Researchers
    - a. Internet of Things, remote sensing, geofencing, pasture biomass inventory, animal health status, drought sensing, monitoring technologies
    - b. Carrying capacity vs. genetics vs. management
    - c. Comparison of ranch management approaches by dividing the ranch into two and managing them differently
    - d. Carbon sequestration

**Progress Report. Youth Outreach Sub-Committee – Activity 4.**

- Dr. Billy Zanolini, Asst. Prof. and Ext. Spec. – Youth Livestock and Agriculture, College Station
- Dr. Darlene Locke, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, RPTS, College Station
- Dr. Robert Strong, Task Force Chair, Asst. Professor and Associate Department Head for Graduate Programs, College Station
- Dr. Juan Landivar, Task Force Chair and Center Director, Corpus Christi and Weslaco

The purpose of the meeting was to investigate the possibility of collaboration with the Youth Development Task Force in AgriLife. Through conversation, it was determined that there are shared goals between both task forces and a collaboration would be beneficial for both. Below are some of the discussion points:

1. The Thomas Ranch could provide leadership and camping experiences for urban and rural youth alike. Through shooting sports, rock climbing, archery, ropes course, ziplines, escape rooms,

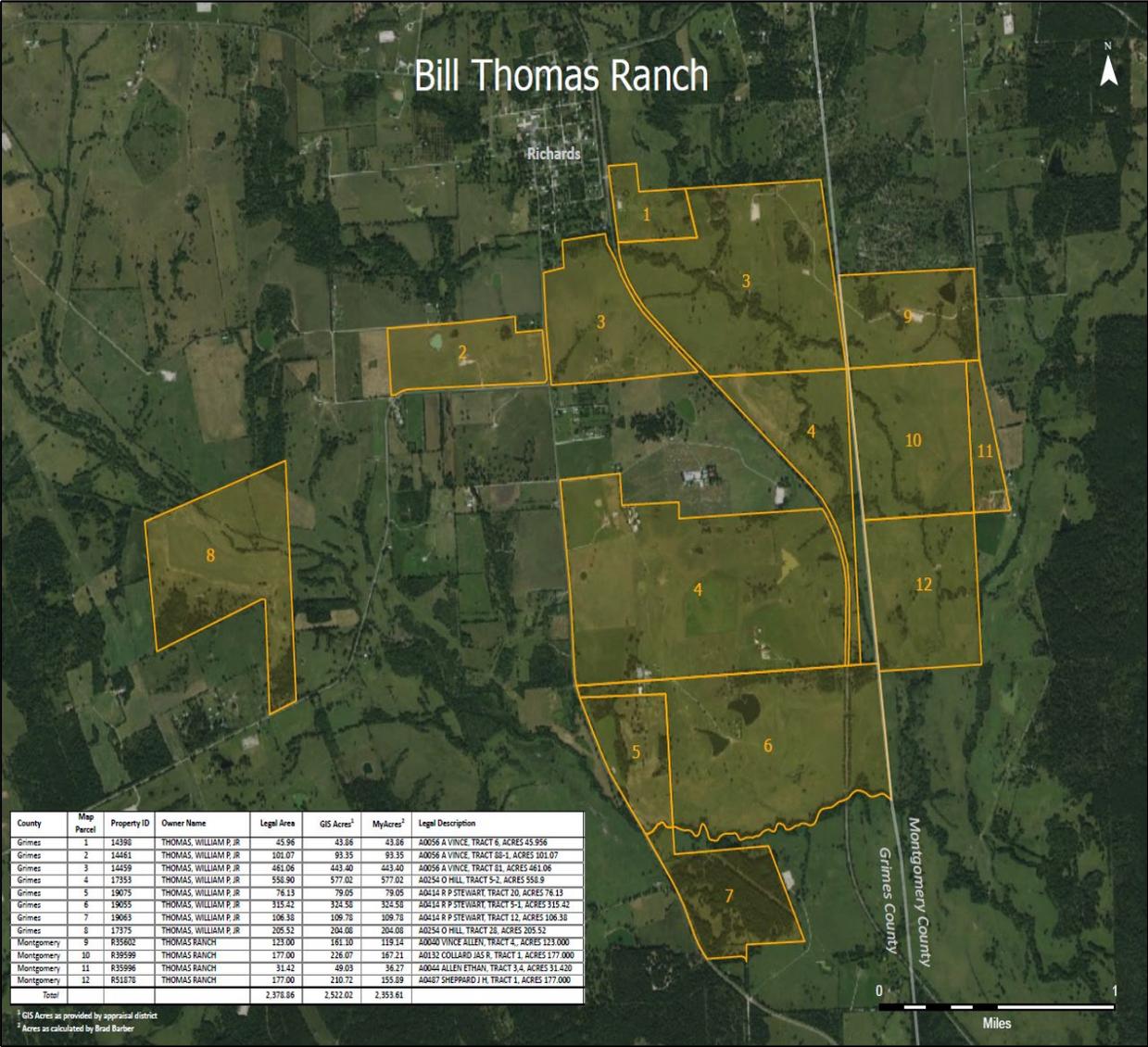
fishing, kayaking and much more – students could engage the outdoor experiences. The Thomas Ranch could support the leadership development and mental health of Texas Youth.

2. While Texas 4-H and FFA youth will still be offered programming at the Thomas Ranch, a deliberate effort should be made to include urban audiences outside of traditional agricultural programs. Programs that provide real-world and STEM-related experiences. Zanolini mentioned existing partnerships with Houston ISD and Harris County Schools.
3. The Thomas Ranch will need a coordinator or director to provide management of maintenance, projects, scheduling etc.
4. Dr. Landivar shared how agricultural Microsoft AI could be incorporated at the ranch. This could also add a powerful STEM component the ranch's educational profile.
5. Dr. Locke shared her experience as a director of the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood. She stressed the importance of the Thomas Ranch developing significant funding partners to make a potential youth center at the Thomas Ranch economically viable.
6. Zanolini expressed the need for infrastructure investment to support large overnight youth events.
7. Dr. Strong shared that the Youth Development Task Force is currently working on big picture ideas related to youth development in AgriLife. He envisions the Thomas Ranch Task Force and the Youth Development Task Force collaborating in the future.
8. Dr. Locke suggested to not overlook opportunities for internships and collaborative project work with TAMU students, TAMU faculty and courses held at TAMU.

#### **Timberland Production and Research – Leader Dr. Bill Oates (TFS), Activity 5.**

Dr. Bill Oates, Associate Director, Texas A&M Forest Service, indicated that his group may provide a business plan for forestry but must be allowed to conduct an on-site assessment. This would include an inventory and appraisal of the merchantable timber. This work cannot do it remotely. He expect we'll only need 1 or 2 days maximum to assess the opportunities in timber production at the ranch.

Dr. Oates provide the following information.

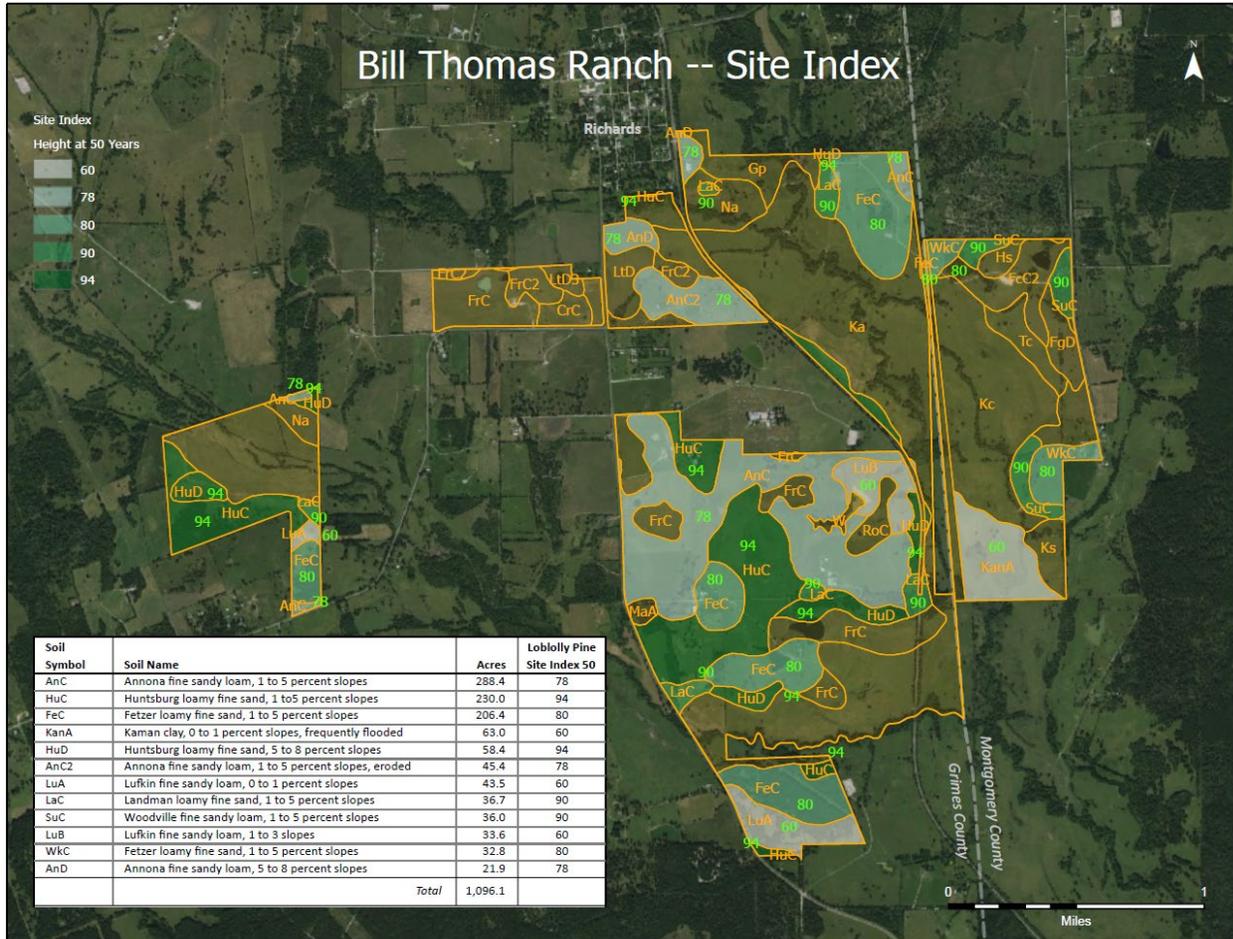


County	Map Parcel	Property ID	Owner Name	Legal Area	GIS Acres <sup>1</sup>	MyAcres <sup>2</sup>	Legal Description
Grimes	1	14398	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	45.96	43.88	43.88	A0056 A VINCE, TRACT 6, ACRES 45.956
Grimes	2	14461	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	101.07	93.35	93.35	A0056 A VINCE, TRACT 88-1, ACRES 101.07
Grimes	3	14459	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	461.06	443.40	443.40	A0056 A VINCE, TRACT 81, ACRES 461.06
Grimes	4	17353	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	556.90	577.02	577.02	A0254 O HILL, TRACT 5-2, ACRES 556.9
Grimes	5	19075	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	76.13	79.05	79.05	A0114 R P STEVENS TRACT 20, ACRES 76.13
Grimes	6	19055	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	315.32	322.58	322.58	A0114 R P STEVENS TRACT 5-1, ACRES 315.32
Grimes	7	19063	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	106.38	109.78	109.78	A0114 R P STEVENS TRACT 12, ACRES 106.38
Grimes	8	17375	THOMAS, WILLIAM P. JR	205.52	204.08	204.08	A0254 O HILL, TRACT 28, ACRES 205.52
Montgomery	9	R35802	THOMAS RANCH	123.00	161.10	119.14	A0040 VINCE ALLEN, TRACT 4, ACRES 123.000
Montgomery	10	R39599	THOMAS RANCH	177.00	226.07	167.21	A0132 COLLARD JAS R, TRACT 1, ACRES 177.000
Montgomery	11	R35996	THOMAS RANCH	31.42	49.03	36.27	A0044 ALLEN ETHAN, TRACT 3.4, ACRES 31.420
Montgomery	12	R51176	THOMAS RANCH	177.00	210.72	155.89	A0487 SHEPPARD J H, TRACT 1, ACRES 177.000
	Total			2,376.06	2,522.02	2,353.61	

<sup>1</sup> GIS Acres as provided by appraisal district  
<sup>2</sup> Acres as calculated by Brad Barber

### Soils Present on Bill Thomas Ranch

Soil Symbol	Soil Name	Acres	Percent	Loblolly Pine Site Index 50
Ka	Kaman clay, frequently flooded	605.2	25.7	
AnC	Annona fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes	258.4	11.0	78
HuC	Huntsburg loamy fine sand, 1 to 5 percent slopes	230.0	9.8	94
FeC	Fetzer loamy fine sand, 1 to 5 percent slopes	206.4	8.8	80
Kc	Kaufman clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes, frequently flooded, southern	174.2	7.4	
FrC	Frelsburg clay, 1 to 5 percent slopes	164.0	7.0	
FrC2	Latium clay, 1 to 5 percent slopes, eroded	71.3	3.0	
KanA	Kaman clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes, frequently flooded	63.0	2.7	60
Na	Nahatche clay loam, frequently flooded	62.1	2.6	
HuD	Huntsburg loamy fine sand, 5 to 8 percent slopes	58.4	2.5	94
AnC2	Annona fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes, eroded	45.4	1.9	78
LuA	Lufkin fine sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	43.5	1.8	60
LaC	Landman loamy fine sand, 1 to 5 percent slopes	36.7	1.6	90
SuC	Woodville fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes	36.0	1.5	90
LuB	Lufkin fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	33.6	1.4	60
WkC	Fetzer loamy fine sand, 1 to 5 percent slopes	32.8	1.4	80
Gp	Gowker clay loam, frequently flooded	32.0	1.4	
FrC2	Frelsburg clay, 1 to 5 percent slopes, eroded	27.8	1.2	
Tc	Trinity clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes, frequently flooded	24.4	1.0	
LtD	Latium clay, 5 to 8 percent slopes	23.6	1.0	
FgD	Latium-Gullied land complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes	22.0	0.9	
AnD	Annona fine sandy loam, 5 to 8 percent slopes	21.9	0.9	78
Ks	Kosse soils, frequently flooded	20.9	0.9	
RoC	Robco-Tanglewood complex, 1 to 5 percent slopes	16.3	0.7	
CrC	Crockett fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes	13.7	0.6	
Hs	Bleiberville clay	10.5	0.4	
LtD3	Latium clay, 4 to 12 percent slopes, severely eroded	8.3	0.4	
W	Water	6.1	0.3	
MaA	Mabank fine sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	5.9	0.3	
	<i>Total</i>	2,354.4	100.0	



**A few observations:**

- According to our parcel data, a shade over 2,500 acres.
- We see roughly 150 acres in merchantable timberland available for demonstration areas; with the largest stands confined to the Southernmost area of the property.
- Based on soils data, approximately 1/3 of the property is suitable for commercial timber growth; potential opportunities for afforestation/conversion and carbon sequestration/storage demo programs.
- Given the proximity to large metro- and suburban areas, property could be very useful for conservation education activities.

**Activities Planned for May 2021:**

Activity team leaders will continue assembling their teams, organizing/brainstorming, producing a list of information needed to define the opportunities for the ranch.

Team leaders would consult with Rick Vierling for information he may need to develop a business plan for the ranch. Align programmatic activities and revenue streams listed above.

The chair thanks the valuable contribution of Ms. Cathy Cardwell (Texas A&M AgriLife-Corpus Christi) and Ms. Christi Anderson in the preparation, distribution of documents and organizing meetings for this group.

## **International Research and Development in AgriLife (Task Force 9) Progress Report - April 2021**

The International Research and Development in AgriLife Task Force held its full committee meeting via TEAMS on 27 April 2021. In attendance were Task Force members Elsa Murano, Heather Simmons, Daniel Leskovar, Juliana Rangel, Tim Davis, Russell Cross, Jeff Gwyn, Ky Pohler, Muthukumar Bagavathiannan, Kirk Winemiller, Elizabeth Parker, and Megha Parajulee (Chair). Executive Assistant Angela Bailey helped with the meeting logistics. Following are the discussion points that took place during the meeting.

1. Established two committees:
  - **Report Outline Committee** - This committee is charged to develop an overall outline of the prospective report. The structure will outline the prospective final report and deliverables that fully addresses the charge and expectations of this Task Force. We expect to develop a fairly high-level (broad) outline that integrates both strategic and functional recommendations. Once the questionnaire is developed and survey conducted, data will be analyzed, and information extracted to address each section in the report outline. Members volunteered/assigned on this committee are **Parker (Chair), Murano, Gwyn, Cross, Davis, Winemiller, and Parajulee.**
  - **Questionnaire Developing Committee** - This committee will develop a survey questionnaire that will address the issues that were identified in our March report. A Qualtrics survey will be utilized. Members volunteered/assigned are **Rangel (Chair), Pohler, Leskovar, Bagavathiannan, Simmons, Mishra, Mazurkiewicz, and Parajulee.**
2. Each committee has until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May (week of May 17) to report back to the whole group.
3. Task Force (whole group) meeting will be set for the week of May 17<sup>th</sup> (Angela will get the Doodle Poll sent out soon).
4. We expect to finalize questionnaire and report structure in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May and a Qualtrics survey will soon follow.
5. It is anticipated that 2-3 additional months (summer) may be needed for a comprehensive survey, data analysis, and report preparation.