



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Soil Survey Region

Rosenburg, Bryan, and Robstown MLRA Soil Survey Offices

Long Acre Ranch Land and Homesite Judging Contest

Purpose

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees from the Rosenberg, Bryan, and Robstown, Texas, MLRA Soil Survey Offices partnered with members of Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Master Naturalists, Texas Master Gardeners, Texas A&M Agrilife, and the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute to offer events for a Future Farmers of America (FFA) Career Development Event at Long Acres Ranch in Fort Bend County. Seven Lakes High School in Katy, Texas, hosted the event. The NRCS soil scientists who worked together to set up the land and homesite contests were Scott Cardenas and Stacey Kloesel from the Rosenberg MLRA Soil Survey Office, Beyhan Amichev and Adryn Velasquez from the Bryan MLRA Soil Survey Office, and Gary Harris from the Robstown MLRA Soil Survey Office. Events included in the contest pertained to entomology, floriculture, land, homesites, and wildlife. Scholarship awards for qualifying seniors totaled \$6,000 in the land judging contest and \$6,000 in the homesite judging contest. This invitational contest was a precursor to the state and national competition.

Background

This was the second year that Seven Lakes High School hosted this event at Long Acres Ranch. This ranch provides soil diversity for the contest because it is situated along the Brazos River where layers of soil from flooding events can be seen in the soil profile. Soil scientists were able to locate soil pit locations that offered a fair amount of slope on natural levees on the flat coastal plain landscape. Long Acres Ranch is comprised of 768 acres of farmland and ranchland that was historically in cultivation. The property is an important piece of history for Texas and the Rosenberg and Richmond area as it is a relatively undeveloped property within the urban setting of Fort Bend County. The Long Acres Ranch [website](#) states, "The Ranch provides a unique, natural environment for educational and recreational activities and promotes the appreciation of nature and open space in the heart of one of the fastest growing areas of Texas."



Key Outcomes

This Career Development Event challenges FFA students to experience and grow in the agriculture discipline. The skills acquired at events such as this help prepare students for college and future careers. Some students walked away from the contest with trophies and scholarships; all students walked away with new experiences in agriculture, leadership, and teamwork.



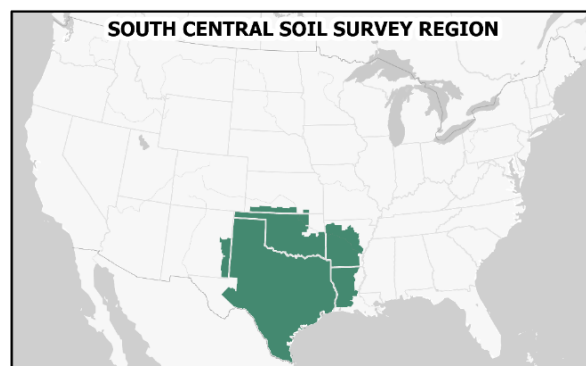
Soil Scientists Scott Cardenas and Gary Harris collaborate on describing characteristics of a land judging pit.



A land judging pit face.



Students participating in the homesite contest along the Brazos River.



The South Central Soil Survey Region, which includes Texas and parts of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, and Louisiana.