



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Region

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 77E, Southern High Plains, Breaks

Lubbock and Woodward Soil Survey Staff Provide Assistance to the Setup of the Donley County Future Farmers of American (FFA) Land Judging Contest

Purpose

During the third week of March 2024, Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) staff of the South Central Region assisted with the setup of the Donley County FFA Land Judging Contest near Clarendon, Texas (fig. 1). The contest was hosted by the Donley County FFA and the Donley County Soil Water Conservation District in Clarendon, Texas.

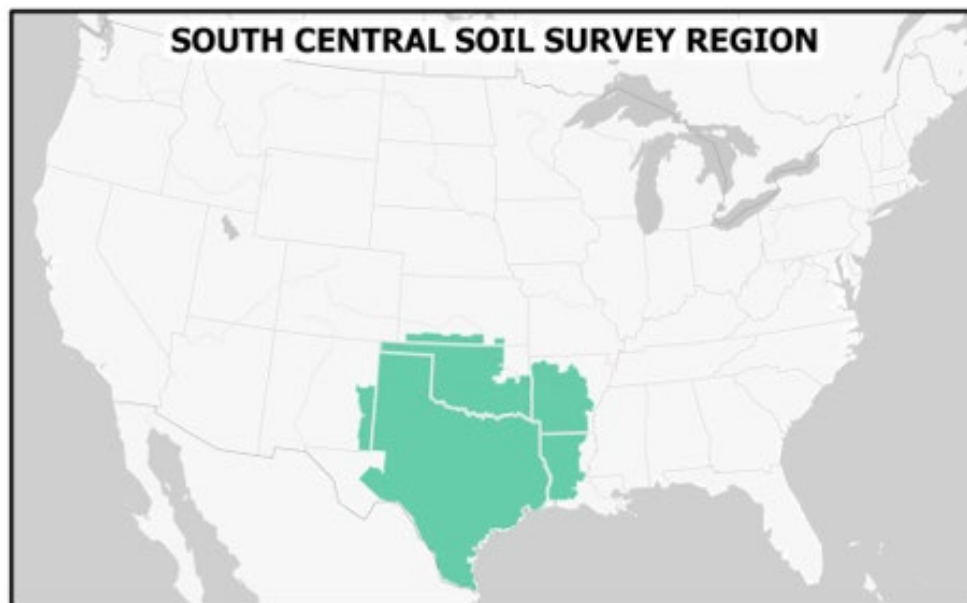


Figure 1.—This map shows the South Central Soil Survey Region. Clarendon, Texas, is located in the southeastern part of the Texas Panhandle.

Background

Kelly Attebury (resource soil scientist) from the Texas Zone 1 office, Meagan Riley (district conservationist) from the Lubbock Field Office, and Todd Carr (MLRA 77 leader) and Emma Schmidt (soil scientist) from the MLRA 77 SPSP office in Lubbock joined Lori McMorrough (cartographic technician) from the Canyon, Texas, field office, Curtis Perkins (soil conservationist) from the Memphis, Texas, field office and Lee Tillman (civil engineer) from the Childress, Texas, field office to set up the 2024 Donley County FFA Land Judging Contest. The assistance included marking out the land judging site parameters, measuring slope within the judging site area, describing the soil profiles exposed in the pits, isolating the topsoil and subsoil into piles for the students to judge, and filling out the official contest score cards (fig. 2).



Figure 2.—Kelly Attebury checks soil depth in the pit as Emma Schmidt and Meagan Riley observe.



Key Outcomes

The Donley County FFA land judging contest has been an annual event for many years. Contestants determine the topsoil and subsoil textures, soil depth, degree of soil erosion and the slope at each of four land judging sites. They use this information to determine permeability, runoff, and land capability class. Contestants make interpretive judgements for plant nutrient applications according to the information given. Finally, contestants rate land suitability according to the limitations at each of the four sites concerning use for agriculture and for homesite development. Many SPSD soil scientists learned about and began describing soils and making interpretive judgements about land use suitability as participants in these FFA land judging contests. Consequently, these events are very important as educational and outreach opportunities.