



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

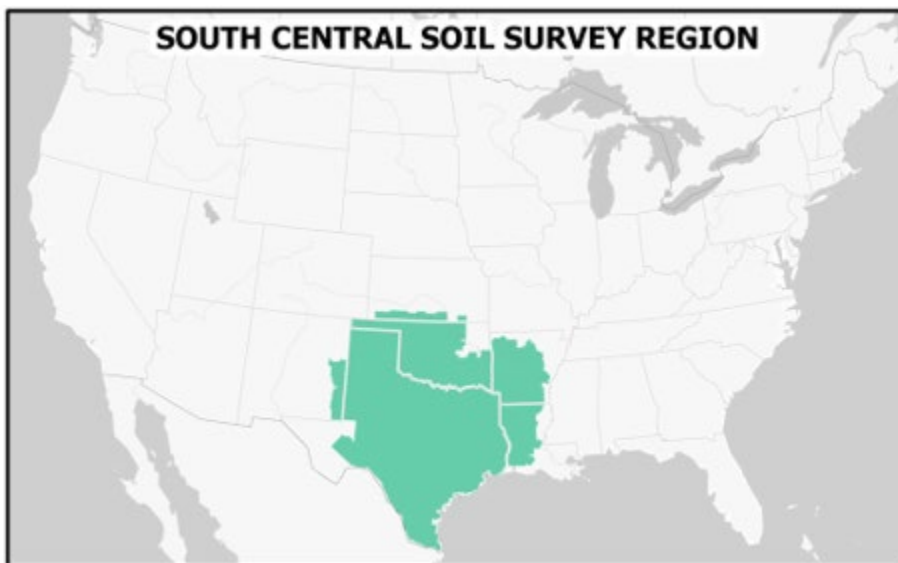
South Central Region

Southern High Plains, Southern Part, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA)

Lubbock Soil Survey Staff Help Set-up the Hale County 4H Land Judging Contest

Purpose

During the second week of April 2024, Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) staff of the South-Central Region, assisted with the set-up of the Hale County 4H Land Judging Contest near Plainview, Texas. The contest was hosted by the Hale County 4H and the Hale County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Plainview, Texas.



Background

Todd Carr, MLRA leader from the MLRA SPSP office in Lubbock, Texas; Stetsen Coffman, soil conservationist from the Plainview, Texas, field office; and Kyla Tolbert, civil engineering technician from the Littlefield, Texas, field office, helped set-up the 2024 Hale County 4H Land



Judging Contest. The assistance provided 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 (Figure 1).

Key Outcomes

The Hale County 4H land judging contest has been an annual event for many years. Contestants are asked to determine the topsoil and subsoil textures, soil depth, degree of soil erosion, and slope at each of the four land judging sites. They use this information to determine permeability, runoff, and land capability class. Interpretive judgements are made for plant nutrient applications according to the information given. Finally, contestants will rate land suitability according to the limitations at each of the four sites concerning use for agriculture and homesite development. Many SPSP soil scientists received their first exposure to describing soils and making interpretive judgements about land use suitability through these 4H land judging contests. Consequently, these events are very important as educational and outreach opportunities.



Figure 1.—Todd Carr checking the depth of the soil profile exposed within the judging area of the pit.