



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Region

Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 77C, Southern High Plains, Southern Part

Lubbock and Woodward Soil Survey Staff Help Setup the Randall County Future Farmers of America (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 Randall County Future Farmers of America (FFA) Land Judging Contest near Canyon, Texas (fig. 1). The contest was hosted by the Randall County FFA and the Randall County Soil Water Conservation District in Canyon, Texas.

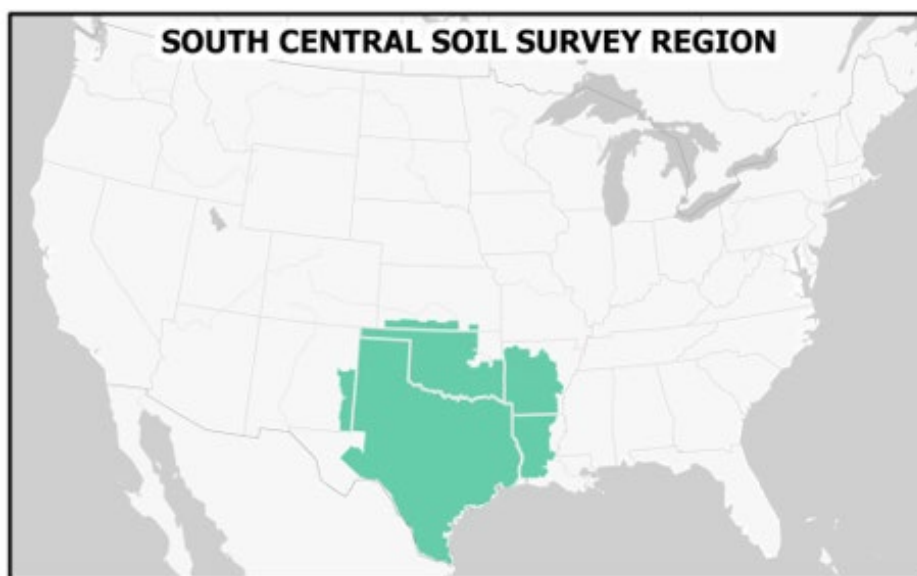


Figure 1.—This map shows the South Central Soil Survey Region. Canyon, Texas, is located in the center of the Texas Panhandle.

Background

Kelly Attebury (resource soil scientist) from the Texas Zone 1 office, Meagan Riley (district conservationist) from the Lubbock Field Office, Todd Carr (MLRA 77 leader) and Emma Schmidt (soil scientist) from the MLRA 77 SPSP office in Lubbock, Texas, and Brandon Vaverka (soil scientist) from the Woodward SPSP office in Woodward, Oklahoma, joined Lori McMorrough (cartographic technician) and Matthew Winters (soil conservation technician) from the Canyon, Texas, field office to set up the 2024 Randall 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.—Emma Schmidt examines soil structure in the pit as Todd Carr checks the permeability ratings in the Land Judging Manual.



Key Outcomes

The Randall 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, they will rate land suitability according to the limitations at each of the four sites concerning use for agriculture and for homesite development. Many SPSPD 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.