



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Soil Survey Region

Stephenville, Texas, Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Office

SPSD Helps Facilitate 2024 Tarleton State University National Future Farmers of America Organization Land and Homesite Judging Contest

Purpose

On April 25, 2024, the Soil Plant Science Division (SPSD) helped facilitate the 2024 Tarleton State University National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Organization Land and Homesite Judging Contest. The contest took place on a ranch just west of Desdemona, Texas, (fig. 1). Under the coordination of State Soil Scientist Alan Stahnke, the Temple, Stephenville, and Weatherford, Texas, offices were able to help set up and monitor the event.

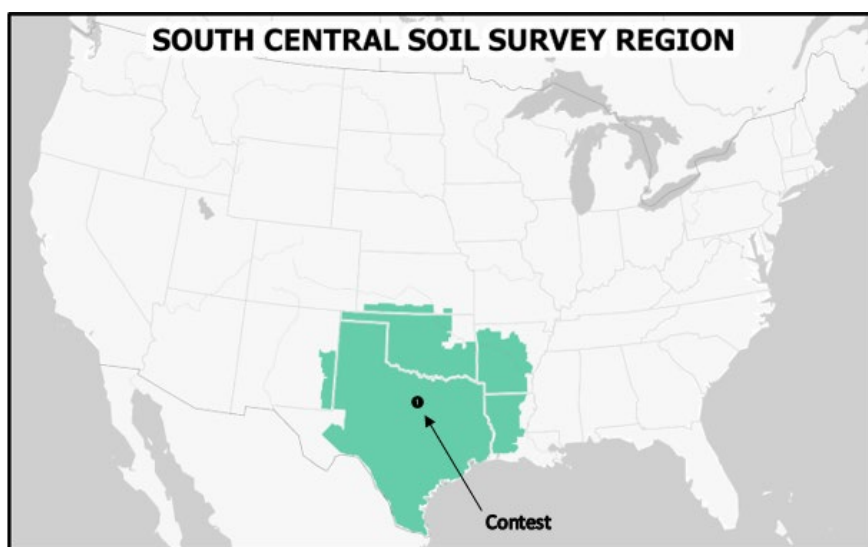


Figure 1.—A map of the South Central Soil Survey Region with the location of the Tarleton State University State National FFA Organization Land and Homesite contest.

Background

Prior to the contest date, SPSD staff excavated soil pits at the contest location (fig. 2). There were four soil pits for land judging and four soil pits for homesite judging. Staff described all pits and subsurface and topsoil was collected and placed in tubs for students to texture during the contest. SPSD staff collaborated to produce an answer key for both land and homesite judging for the official contest. During the contest, SPSD staff were soil pit monitors. Every soil pit had a monitor to ensure all student participants followed contest rules.



Figure 2.—Soil pit for the Tarleton State University State contest.

Key Outcomes

Approximately 400 students competed in the contest. These students gained firsthand knowledge of what a soil scientist would collect and see out in the field. The contest gave students a better understanding and appreciation for jobs they could potentially do in the future.