



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Soil Survey Region

Stephenville, Texas, Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Office

2024 Tarleton State University National Future Farmers of America Organization Land and Homesite Judging Contests

Purpose

On April 10, 2024, Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) staff helped facilitate the 2024 Tarleton State University National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Organization Land and Homesite Judging Contest. The contest took place at the Houston Ranch, just north of Bluff Dale, Texas, (fig. 1). Under the coordination of State Soil Scientist Alan Stahnke, the Temple, Stephenville, and Weatherford, Texas, offices were able to come out and help set up and monitor the event.

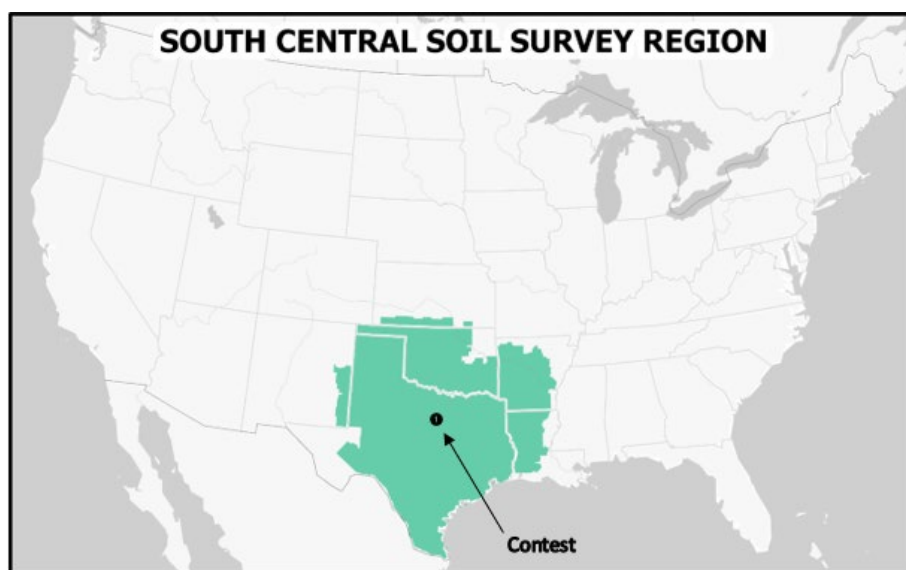


Figure 1.—A map of the South Central Soil Survey Region with the location of the Tarleton State University Area FFA Land and Homesite contest.

Background

Prior to the contest date, the 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 acted as soil pit monitors. Every soil pit had a monitor to assure all student participants followed contest rules.



Figure 2.—A soil pit for the Tarleton State University Area contest.

Key Outcomes

Approximately 650 students competed. These students gained firsthand knowledge of what a soil scientist would collect and see out in the field. By competing in the contest, students gained a better understanding and appreciation for jobs they could potentially do in the future.