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Farm and ranch lands are an iconic part of our Texas landscape, particularly within the upper Texas coastal prairie and marshes region that includes the Katy Prairie. Coastal prairies support some of the most productive farm and ranch lands in Texas along with critical wetland and grassland habitats essential to wildlife. Despite this fact, working lands are being converted to other uses at an alarming rate. Did you know that working lands create value to all Texans that extend well beyond food and fiber production? Direct and indirect benefits include robust support of rural economies, improved food security for at-risk households, and management of critical wildlife habitat.

MORE THAN

85%

of Texas is
operated in
farm, ranch,
or timber
production.

LOCAL ECONOMIES

These working lands are a significant economic driver throughout the state. Farmers and ranchers produce approximately \$25 billion in sold commodities per year while employing 1 in 7 working adults. However, the impacts of agriculture extend beyond commodities sales with additional impacts felt through direct and indirect support services. Farmers and ranchers of the upper Texas coastal region generate an estimated \$12 billion in economic impact while providing more than 77,000 jobs – most of these jobs occurring within rural communities. With 98.5% of farms and ranches run by individuals and families, Texas agriculture is very much a home grown and community-based industry.

FOOD SECURITY

Access to healthy food can be an afterthought for many Texans. However, 1 in 8 Texas households face food insecurity – where access to healthy meals, essential to physical, oral, and behavioral development, is unpredictable or extremely costly. Food deserts occur in both rural and urban communities – impacting families in a broad array of socio-economic groups. Texas farmers and ranchers help combat food insecurity by partnering with agencies and non-profits, including local food banks, to provide surplus produce for those in need. Many Texas landowners offer additional opportunities by donating venison to programs like Hunters for the Hungry.



Regenerative Ag/Grazing:

Grassland ecosystems are among the most critically imperiled in the United States. Over 50% of grasslands have been lost or severely degraded. The resultant 50-80% decline in grassland dependent birds is a resounding alarm to the crisis. However, the good news is that there are practical solutions available. Texas farmers and ranchers are in a great position to take on these conservation challenges by continuing to steward important grassland habitat and instituting regenerative agriculture practices. One practice, regenerative grazing, not only improves grassland quality and quantity but is also shown to decrease operational costs for beef production while increasing grassland bird abundance and diversity. Even more, research shows that regenerative agriculture aids in sequestering atmospheric carbon in the soil, which helps tackle climate change.

RICE FARMING

In Texas, rice farming and wetland conservation are synonymous. Texas rice farmers provide over 300,000 acres of managed wetland habitat utilized by more than 2 million ducks, geese, and cranes annually. The benefits of rice farming extend well beyond waterfowl with more than 100 species of birds documented using habitat created by rice farmers. These farmers contribute enormous wildlife benefits to society for little to no costs to the public. Beyond habitat, Texas rice farming supports thousands of jobs and contributes over \$700 million to the upper Texas Gulf Coast economy.



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Economics

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Ag Habitat

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