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**For Immediate Release**

## **Texas Peanut Growers Selected for National Leadership Academy**

*Growers visit Georgia for first session August 23-25*

**LUBBOCK, Texas (September 13, 2010)** – Two Texas peanut producers were recently selected for the seventh class of the national Peanut Leadership Academy, sponsored by Syngenta Crop Protection and the American Peanut Shellers Association. The Academy is a cooperative effort between agricultural extension services and various grower organizations.

Aaron Martin and Jarred Ericson, both of Brownfield, Texas, were selected to join 20 other rising leaders in the peanut industry in the two-year Academy. They met for the Academy's first session August 23-25 at Lake Blackshear in Georgia.

"We are excited to have two Texas producers participate in this distinguished academy," TPPB Executive Director Shelly Nutt said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for these young producers to expand their knowledge of the industry and gain skills that enable them to be ready leaders and spokesmen for Texas peanuts."

Ericson farms approximately 16,000 acres across the South Plains. He has been farming peanuts, cotton, wheat and corn for the past five years.

Martin has farmed peanuts, cotton and wheat for approximately six years. He farms more than 1,100 acres in the Terry County area.

The Academy aims to expose the class of growers to all aspects of the peanut industry and engage them in activities to develop their leadership skills.

For the first session of the Academy, Ericson and Martin joined other participants for leadership training and toured a peanut oil refinery and USDA peanut research lab. Over the next two years, Academy attendees will travel to Texas, Alabama, Florida and Washington D.C. to meet key legislators, tour various agricultural operations, and gain a well-rounded knowledge of the challenges facing peanut growers nationwide.

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Upon completion of the Academy, these growers will be armed with the knowledge and ability to be advocates and spokespeople for the peanut industry and agriculture as a whole.

"The entire program helps prepare everyone involved in peanut production to meet the future and help create a better industry," said Lyle Stewart, a Syngenta Crop Protection representative. "The long term benefits will be evident as we see these young growers step into leadership positions."

Academy participants are nominated by agricultural leaders in their counties and then selected by a committee of state leaders. For more information about the Peanut Leadership Academy, visit [www.southernpeanutfarmers.org](http://www.southernpeanutfarmers.org).

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*The Texas Peanut Producers Board is a state-wide board funded by a \$2 per ton voluntary checkoff program. TPPB is responsible for coordinating peanut research, promotion and marketing programs. For more information, visit [www.TexasPeanutBoard.com](http://www.TexasPeanutBoard.com) or contact TPPB Communications Director Stephanie Pruitt at [stephanie@texaspeanutboard.com](mailto:stephanie@texaspeanutboard.com).*