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**For Immediate Release**

**Programs Finalized for Texas Commodity Symposium, Ag Appreciation Luncheon**

**LUBBOCK, Texas (November 17, 2011)** – Texas Rep. Rick Hardcastle will be the keynote speaker for the eleventh annual Texas Commodity Symposium and Luncheon, scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 30. Hardcastle will discuss various issues impacting the Texas agricultural industry.

The Symposium will be held Wednesday, Nov. 30, in Amarillo in conjunction with the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show in the Grand Plaza Room at the Amarillo Civic Center. The free event will begin at 9:30 a.m.

In addition to Rep. Hardcastle, Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, Texas state climatologist, will discuss the current drought situation and projections for 2012. Tom Sell with Combest, Sell and Associates will update attendees on current developments in farm policy. Texas Rep. Walter "Four" Price of Amarillo will discuss the new agricultural sales tax exemption, and David Schanbacher with the Texas Comptroller's office will talk about endangered species and their economic impact on Texas.

Other featured topics include updates from the Texas Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, along with an update on a Conservation Innovation Grant from the North Plains Groundwater District and Texas Tech's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources' Water Center. The morning program ends with an expert panel discussing water issues.

"We're excited to offer attendees an interesting program this year that addresses issues that will not only affect the agricultural industry, but also everyone in the West Texas region," CPAT Executive Vice President David Gibson said. "We encourage producers and those in agribusiness alike to attend the 2011 Texas Commodity Symposium."

The symposium, which is hosted by the Corn Producers Association of Texas, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., Texas Grain Sorghum Association, Texas Peanut Producers Board and Texas Wheat Producers Association, will conclude with the annual Ag Appreciation Luncheon, presented by the Texas Commodity Symposium and the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Ag Council.

"This is a great opportunity to hear a diverse group of speakers addressing the main issues affecting agriculture on the Texas High Plains," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said.

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