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TAD DIRECTOR WINS STATE HONOR

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CORPUS CHRISTI – John Cowan, executive director of the Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD) since 2002, has been named 2009 Cooperator of the Year by the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC). Cowan was given the award, TACC's highest honor, in a surprise presentation at TACC's recent annual conference in Corpus Christi.

"I am truly surprised and honored to be recognized by the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council and its members," Cowan said. "It has been a privilege to work alongside those in Texas who are dedicated to preserving and promoting agriculture so that farmers can continue to produce healthy food for the citizens of our state."

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In presenting the award, Ken Leiber of Fort Worth, president of the Texas Livestock Marketing Association, called Cowan "a very conscientious and determined individual" and "a man of extreme importance to agriculture."

"Throughout his career, he has worked hard to acquire the skills and knowledge at each job level," Leiber said. "To him, it has been an honor to work for farmers and the agricultural industry. He has earned a reputation as a hard working, knowledgeable, honest and loyal representative to the industry."

Cowan began his career in the dairy industry in 1970 in a position of washing milk trucks and tanks at an Associated Milk Producers truck facility in Dublin, Texas. As he rose through the ranks of responsibility at different cooperative locations, he also continued his formal and informal education learning about the dairy industry.

As a longtime Dublin resident, Cowan was named "Man of the Year" in 1985 and served as president of the Dublin School Board and as a member of the Dublin City Council. In 1990, he moved to Arlington in a new role for Associated Milk Producers, which later merged with other cooperatives to form the Dairy Farmers of America. After several years, he also became manager of the newly created Texas Association of Dairymen.

Currently, Cowan serves on various boards and committees throughout Texas, including TACC. He has worked with many organizations and state agencies including the Texas Critical Infrastructure Advisory Group, Natural Resources Conservation Service's State Technical Committee and National Animal Health Association and is actively engaged working for state agriculture on environmental stewardship programs.

The Texas Association of Dairymen (www.milk4texas.org) is a non-profit corporation comprised of dairy cooperatives whose members are individual milk producers in Texas.