

Proclamation Honoring Mr. Ray Prewett

Whereas Mr Ray Prewett, a native of Oklahoma received an Agricultural Economics degree from Oklahoma State in 1966 and a Masters Degree in Agricultural Economics from Purdue in 1968,

and whereas Prewett began his career with Texas Agricultural Extension Service as a Community Development Specialist with the Agricultural Economics Department of Texas A&M University in College Station, and through this position traveled to many areas of Texas working with rural communities on community and rural development,

and whereas this position gave him the opportunity to work with Reagan Brown, a rural sociologist with Extension, who later became Texas Commissioner of Agriculture with Prewett as his campaign manager,

and whereas Governor Preston Smith created the Texas Rural Development Commission and Prewett was appointed the first Executive Director,

and whereas Reagan Brown brought Mr. Prewett into the Texas Department of Agriculture as Assistant Commissioner then later appointed him Deputy Commissioner,

and whereas Prewett moved to Mission, Texas in 1983 and accepted a position with Texas Citrus Mutual, a trade association serving the Texas Citrus Industry,

and whereas Mr. Prewett sold tree insurance to many growers just prior to the 1983 freeze that played a major role in the survival of the citrus industry,

and whereas in 1984 Prewett became Executive Vice President of the Texas Vegetable Association. In that position he worked very closely with Extension entomologists to obtain Section 18 pesticide registrations and built a coalition that worked to modify state pesticide regulations so that farmers could live with common-sense regulations while still protecting farm workers and the public,

and whereas Mexico's water debt to the U.S. became a very hot issue during the drought of the 1980's. Much work on this issue was accomplished by a Prewett-led coalition called "Texans for Treaty Compliance." Prewett made numerous trips to Washington to meet with the State Department. The coalition worked with local irrigation districts to obtain millions of dollars of federal funding that was used to make water-saving improvements in the infrastructure that delivers irrigation water to farmers,

and whereas Prewett has been active at the national level as an advocate for: increased funding for specialty crops in the Farm Bill, support for pest and disease programs for APHIS, reasonable pesticide laws and regulations, expanding the use of fruits and vegetables in schools and USDA's feeding programs, and many other issues through his coordination

with citrus organizations in Florida, California and the United Fresh Produce Association, and whereas Mr. Prewett is currently active in two national agricultural organizations working on the immigration issue: the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform and the National Council for Agricultural Employers (NCAE). Both of these groups have been at the forefront of pushing for immigration reform. In January, 2013 Prewett became President of NCAE,

and whereas Mr. Prewett has worked on many agricultural issues in the Valley and in Texas, serves in numerous positions at local, state and national levels including A&M's College of Agriculture Development Council, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Agricultural Advisory Board and Region M Water Planning Group,

and whereas the most challenging issue to be faced by the Texas citrus industry to date is Citrus Greening disease that threatens the very survival of the Texas citrus industry. The last two years Prewett has worked to bring several hundred thousand dollars from the state and federal sources to develop a local comprehensive program designed to slow the spread of this devastating disease,

and whereas Prewett serves as Deacon at Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen and enjoys the support of his loving family: wife Jean, son Jeffery (who was very active in the 4-H program) and daughter Julie Hamilton,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court wishes to join the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association in recognizing Mr. Ray Prewett as Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture.

Ramon Garcia
Hidalgo County Judge