

Neighbors

NOVEMBER 2016



Jefferson County
Farmers Federation
Special Report

Jefferson County Farmers Federation

The Jefferson County Farmers Federation (JCFF) is an affiliate of the Alabama Farmers Federation (AFF) and the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF). Jefferson County's agricultural, forestry and related industries generated 55,837 full- and part-time jobs, representing 12.2 percent of the county's total workforce (456,831 jobs). The total impact of agriculture, forestry and related industries was \$5.9 billion, which was 9.3 percent of the county's total economic activity (\$63.2 billion).

JCFF provides a voice for local farmers and highlights the needs and concerns of those in the county involved in various agricultural fields. By supporting legislation and educational opportunities in the county, the Federation strives to assist in telling the farm story and help sustain the individual farmer.

The Young Farmers Program sponsored by the JCFF encourages the next generation of farmers to develop leadership skills and expand interest in agriculture. Programs are in place to recognize achievements of young farmers. By participating in county activities such as Earth Day at the Gardens, Pinson Butterbean Festival, Warrior Days and Farm



Jefferson County Women's Leadership Committee member Dale Gilmore, right, discusses agriculture with visitors at the 2016 Farm Day at the Birmingham Zoo.

Day at the Birmingham Zoo, young farmers play a major role in helping tell the farm story to families and children throughout the county.

By coming together as part of the state's largest farm organization, young farmers can share enthusiasm and

experiences with others to work toward a stronger farming future for themselves and future generations. Efforts are made to identify problems that face young farmers with a focus on solutions to overcome these problems. For more about JCFF, visit JeffCoFarmers.org

County Officers and Directors



Jefferson County Farmers Federation Board Members are, from left, Jimmy Carmack, Norman McClure, Alvin O. Anderson, Edwin E. Snider III (Bubba), Women's Leadership Committee Chairman Kathy Anderson, J. Michael Jenkins, President John W. Morris, Randy Gilmore, Joel S. Earnest, Barry L. Jenkins, Secretary-Treasurer Rhonda R. Hughes, Young Farmers Chairman Brooks Hobson Baker IV, Jeffery Braswell and Johnny W. Morris II.

Jefferson County Farmers Federation Supports Education

The JCFF supports education in a variety of ways including scholarships for area students attending Auburn University, support for local 4-H and FFA chapters and through helping teachers who attended the Alabama Agriculture In The Classroom Summer Institute.

For several years, scholarships have been awarded to students from Jefferson County who enter agricultural fields of study. By supporting collegiate education in all fields of agriculture for the county's students, JCFF is developing future leaders and helping support the future of agriculture.

The JCFF also provides assistance to local FFA chapters in county schools.

County students also participate in local, regional and state livestock shows and competitions supported by the JCFF.

Will Sharp, a May 2016 Auburn University graduate in agriculture economics, works as a full-time farm employee on a 10,000-acre south Georgia farm that raises cotton, peanuts,



Auburn University students and scholarship recipients from Jefferson County were recognized during the Alabama Farmers Federation 2016 Scholarship Recipients Luncheon Aug. 27 at the Ham Wilson Arena in Auburn. Christian Baker of Birmingham studies horticulture. Rachel Kuntz of Trussville studies environmental science. Doston Nichols of Trussville studies poultry science, pre-vet track. Janet Roberts of Vestavia studies natural resources management, and Caleb Tanner of Hoover studies forestry. The \$1,750 scholarships were funded by the Jefferson County Farmers Federation and the Federation's Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation. From left are Federation President Jimmy Parnell, Baker, Kuntz, Nichols, Roberts, Tanner, Jefferson County Farmers Federation President John Morris and Federation Central Region Vice President Dean Wysner. Not pictured is William Tynes of Mountain Brook.

corn, hay and cattle. "The scholarship provided by the Jefferson County Farmers Federation funded my education so I can now learn the business side of farming first-hand," Sharp said. "With funds I had saved for college, I hope to purchase my own farm in two or three years."



Robinson Elementary School teacher Vercilya Reese, right, samples fresh fruit on a farm tour during the AITC Tour in June. Reese was one of 10 teachers from Jefferson County who attended the program.

Alabama Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) is an interdisciplinary educational program that promotes ag literacy for students in grades K-12. AITC Summer Institute was at the Marriott Conference Center in Prattville in June.

Jefferson County's attendees included Lorie Bee, Oak

Grove Elementary; Naomi Breakenridge, Bruno Montessori Academy; Leah Commer, Johnson Elementary; Army Forrest, Bagley School; Lisa Lucas, Oak Grove Elementary; Vercilya Reese, Robinson Elementary; Darlene Skinner, Princeton Elementary; and Kelly Sorrell, Pizitz Middle. Jefferson County Women's Leadership Committee Chairman Kathy Anderson and members Connie Fuller and Joann Wissinger attended.

"The make-and-take sessions were a great opportunity to gain knowledge of the broad perspective of agriculture across Alabama and how it impacts the food we eat here in Jefferson County," Reese said. "Practical activities that helped us see the seed to food process will enable me to educate students in my fourth-grade classroom and help my students understand more about the foods they eat."

AITC Summer Institute integrates agricultural activities for grades K-6 and provides on-farm tours for teachers. Participants receive continuing education units (CEUs), plus classroom materials and teaching strategies to increase student knowledge of the nutritional and economic importance of the food and fiber system.

Applications are open to full-time K-12 classroom teachers, home-school teachers, media specialists and administrative personnel. Visit AlabamaAITC.org for more information.

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