

# Neighbors

A Publication of the Alabama Farmers Federation

NOVEMBER/WINTER 2017

Ag In The  
Classroom

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Scholarship  
Recipients

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County Ag Stats

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Farm To School

*Jefferson County  
Newsletter*

## Jefferson County Farmers Federation

The Jefferson County Farmers Federation provides a voice for local farmers highlighting needs and concerns of those in the county. To improve the lot of the family farm, we analyze and explain impacts of legislative and regulatory changes made by city, county, state and



John Morris,  
County President

federal governments.

Visit [AlfaFarmers.org/Jefferson](http://AlfaFarmers.org/Jefferson) or search for Jefferson County Farmers Federation on Facebook and Twitter.

### County Ag Facts

Total Land Area: **712,070 acres**

Farmland: **40,420 acres**

Timberland: **416,827 acres**

Number of Farms: **470**

#### Top Commodities

- No. 1 - Greenhouse, nursery & floriculture
- No. 2 - Cattle
- No. 3 - Soybeans

## Seven Scholarships Awarded To Ag Students

Auburn University students and scholarship recipients from Jefferson County Janet Roberts, Rachel Kuntz, Christian Baker, Doston Nichols and Thomas Reeves were recognized during the Alabama Farmers Federation 2017 Scholarship Recipients Luncheon Aug. 19 at the Ham Wilson Arena in Auburn.

Roberts studies natural resource management; Kuntz studies environmental sciences; Baker is a horticulture student; Nichols studies ag business and economics; and Reeves

is an animal sciences production management student. Additionally, ag business and economics studies student William Tynes and forestry and wildlife management student Caleb Tanner received scholarships.

One \$1,750 scholarship was awarded through the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation and the Jefferson County Farmers Federation (JCFF), which provided \$500 of the total scholarship. The other six students were awarded scholarships funded by JCFF.



Auburn University students and scholarship recipients Janet Roberts, Rachel Kuntz, Christian Baker, Doston Nichols and Thomas Reeves were recognized during the Alabama Farmers Federation 2017 Scholarship Recipients Luncheon Aug. 19 at the Ham Wilson Arena in Auburn. From left are Federation President Jimmy Parnell, Roberts, Kuntz, Baker, Nichols, Reeves, Jefferson County Farmers Federation President John Morris and Federation Central Area Vice President Dean Wysner of Randolph County. Not pictured are William Tynes, an ag business and economics studies student, and Caleb Tanner, a forestry and wildlife management student.

## Past Jefferson County Scholarship Recipient Finishes Alfa Internship



Former Jefferson County Farmers Federation scholarship recipient John Allen Nichols visited farmers this summer as part of his internship with the Alabama Farmers Federation.

A former Jefferson County Farmers Federation scholarship recipient recently completed a summer internship with the Alabama Farmers Federation and continues working part-time with the organization.

John Allen Nichols, a second-year law student at Faulkner University's Jones School of Law, received a county scholarship his junior and senior years at Auburn University (AU).

"Connecting with the local county Federation provided me an opportunity to be paired with the Federation's Brian Hardin in the AU Ag Mentoring Program my junior year," Nichols said. "Working with Brian piqued my interest in policy and advocacy work, which led me to apply to law school."

Nichols interned in the Federation's Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department, working on state and national legislative concerns as well as Federation policy development.

Highlights of Nichols' summer included visiting farmers throughout Alabama and hearing how they are impacted by state and national policies.

Save money at local businesses and national retailers with your Federation membership.

Visit [AlfaFarmers.org/perks](http://AlfaFarmers.org/perks) for details.

## Farm To School Bill, Urban Farms Highlight Agriculture And Education

Passage of the Alabama Farm to School Bill (HB 53) during the 2017 Alabama legislative session allows schools to make larger purchases of agricultural products from local farmers, providing more local food to kids and expanding Farm to School efforts.

Andrea Carter of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries is educating Jefferson County school personnel about the process for purchasing local produce. Currently, schools participating in the National School Lunch Program receive seven local produce items through a U.S. Department of Agriculture program. School gardens are also part of the Farm to School program.

This summer, Jefferson County Farmers Federation members visited Jones Valley Teaching Farm (JVTF), which partners with schools to provide food education. JVTF operates a downtown farm, five teaching farms known as "Farm Labs," and Woodlawn High School Urban Farm.



Jefferson County Farmers Federation members visited Jones Valley Teaching Farm in downtown Birmingham this summer. The farm partners with schools for interactive food and nutrition lessons.

"We felt we could do the most by working with young people in Birmingham and take urban agriculture to another level while we focused on statewide standards in education," said Amanda Storey, JVTF executive director.

"Starting with Glen Iris Elementary, we developed a program called Good School Food, a pre-K to 12th grade food education model that connects students to food through cross-curricular, standards-based content."

## Jefferson County Educators Become Students At Ag In The Classroom

In June 2017, nine Jefferson County teachers attended the Alabama Ag in the Classroom (AITC) Summer Institute in Tuscaloosa. The annual event for kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers included farm tours, workshops and seminars that show ways to incorporate agriculture into classroom curriculum.

Bagley Elementary School teachers Lindsey Sellers and Ashley Dempsey said they're already using lessons from AITC in the 2017-2018 academic year.

"I've loved having ample books and educational videos on hand to read to and show my students," said Sellers, who teaches first grade. "If they have questions about growing pumpkins or want to know more about farm animals, then I have the resources to teach them."

Sellers filled a bookshelf with agriculture books from the seminar and said her students love reading them.

Dempsey, who teaches second grade, echoed Sellers' sentiments.

"Typically when we ask students where milk comes from they will reply, 'The store!'" she said. "The educational

video gave them a perfect illustration of how milk gets from the farm to our home. It was wonderful seeing my students make that connection."

Both Dempsey and Sellers said they would recommend the AITC program to other teachers.

"You will learn so much and have a new perspective on agriculture," Dempsey said. "The students love learning about all the different types of farming and utilizing the hands-on resources, and I enjoy teaching it!"

Learn more about the Alabama AITC Summer Institute online at [alabamaitc.org](http://alabamaitc.org) or contact the Jefferson County Farmers Federation.

**Top photo:** Nine Jefferson County educators attended the 2017 Ag in the Classroom Summer Institute. Eight of them are pictured with Federation Area 6 Organization Director Wallace Drury, center. **Bottom photo:** Teachers Ashley Dempsey and Lindsey Sellers use books from the institute in their classrooms.



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