

# Cultivator

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## Proposed Beef Checkoff Opposed

The Alabama Farmers Federation opposes a new national beef checkoff program proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Vilsack has announced plans for a separate beef checkoff that would begin in January 2016 and would not require producers' approval prior to implementation.

"We believe such action is duplicative, unnecessary and the wrong approach to beef promotion," said Federation President Jimmy Parnell, who raises beef cattle and timber. "We already have a very successful national beef checkoff that returns more than \$11 for every dollar contributed by farmers and ranchers. A recent survey showed almost 80 percent of U.S. farmers strongly support the current national beef checkoff."

Vilsack released a notice of inquiry Nov. 10 to receive input from beef producers. The Federation plans to submit comments.

At recent Federation State Beef Committee meetings, members have expressed support for increasing the current checkoff assessment and opposition to creating a separate national program.

Currently, \$2 per head of cattle sold in Alabama is collected for national and state beef checkoff programs. Of that, \$1.50 stays in the state for beef research, education and promotion.

For more information, contact Federation Beef Division Director Nate Jaeger at (334) 613-4221 or [NJaeger@alfafarmers.org](mailto:NJaeger@alfafarmers.org).



Alabama Farmers Federation State Wildlife Committee Chairman Will Ainsworth, right, visits with Marshall County Farmers Federation board member Casey Smith. Ainsworth, elected state representative in House District 27, will join 16 freshman representatives in the Legislature.

## Election Results Positive For Farmers

Alabama Farmers Federation members claimed major victories Nov. 4 with the election or re-election of 151 of 158 candidates endorsed by the organization's political action committee, FarmPAC. The four constitutional amendments supported by the Federation also won voter approval.

Each candidate was recommended for endorsement by leaders at the county level.

"This election shows what can happen when citizens get involved," said Federation President Jimmy Parnell. "Our members not only studied the records of the candidates before making an endorsement, but they also talked to their neighbors, knocked on doors, put up signs and, most of all, turned out to vote on election day. The election results will strengthen our members' voice in Montgomery and Washington, D.C."

Parnell said the decisive win by farm-

er-friendly candidates in statewide and legislative races, coupled with return of the U.S. Senate to Republican control, are good news for Alabama families, property owners and small businesses.

"Voters in Alabama and across the country stood up for fiscal responsibility, economic growth, conservative values and respect for the balance of power established in the U.S. Constitution," Parnell said. "This election is an endorsement of the Alabama Legislature's work to create jobs through lower taxes and greater accountability. It's also a strong statement against regulatory overreach by the Obama administration and six years of inaction and divisiveness by leadership in the U.S. Senate."

All FarmPAC-endorsed candidates for Congress, state constitutional offices, state judges and the State Board of Education won. For complete election results, visit [tinyurl.com/AlfaElectionResults](http://tinyurl.com/AlfaElectionResults).

## Barbour To Address Farmers At Federation Annual Meeting

Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour will deliver the keynote address at the closing session of the Alabama Farmers Federation 93rd annual meeting, which runs Dec. 7-8 in Montgomery. Barbour gained national attention for his leadership after Hurricane Katrina.

Federation President Jimmy Parnell will kick off the annual meeting at 4 p.m. Sunday with the first general session, which includes his annual report to members. Later that evening, Dr. Jim Bannon will receive the Service to Agriculture Award, the Federation's highest honor. Bannon recently retired from Auburn University as outlying units director for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station

Grammy Award-winning country music star Ronnie Milsap will perform at 7:30 p.m. Concert tickets are required for admission and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster.com.

Highlights on Monday, Dec. 8, include the Ag Foundation Breakfast, a silent auction, awards and Young Farmers' contests.

The morning general session features awards presentations for outstanding individuals, leaders and county Federations. Winners of the Federation's Young Farmer contests will be announced Monday evening.

## Scenic California Tour

Spots are still available for the scenic California tour during the 2015 American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention. Registration is due Nov. 30. For more details, contact Brittany Daniel at (334) 613-4750.

## Items Needed For Silent Auction

County Young Farmers groups are asked to donate two items valued at \$50 or more for the silent auction at the 93rd annual meeting Dec. 7-8 in Montgomery. The auction benefits the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation.

Suggested items include artwork, truck accessories, gift baskets, tools and farm toys. Only new items will be accepted.

## Upcoming Farm Bill Workshops

STAX Workshops for cotton farmers sponsored by National Cotton Council

- **Nov. 19** — National Peanut Festival Fairgrounds in Dothan at 3 p.m.
- **Nov. 20** — Tennessee Valley Research & Extension Center in Belle Mina at 9 a.m.

General Farm Bill Meetings — all meetings start at 1 p.m.

- **Dec. 9** — Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in Headland
- **Dec. 10** — Bay Minette Civic Center
- **Dec. 11** — Jemison Municipal Building
- **Dec. 12** — Calhoun Community College Aerospace Building in Tanner

For more meeting details and farm bill information, visit [AlabamaFarmBill.com](http://AlabamaFarmBill.com).

## Membership Appreciation Day In Lee County



Lee County Farmers Federation President Mahlon Richburg, middle, and Area Organization Director Preston Roberts, left, talk to local farmer Beth Hornsby of Hornsby Farms, who attended a Customer Appreciation Day at the Alfa Insurance office in Auburn Oct. 24.

## Alabama Farmers Selected To Serve Agriculture

Four Alabama farmers have been chosen to serve on national and state boards.

Sheep farmer and breeder Tammy Doughty of Reform will serve a three-year term on the American Lamb Board (ALB) starting January 2015. She will represent feeders on the board.

Doughty serves on the Alabama Farmers Federation State Meat Goat & Sheep Committee and is a member of the National Lamb Feeders Association and the American Sheep Industry's Young Sheep Entrepreneurs Committee.

Aliceville farmer Annie Dee was recently reappointed to the United Soybean Board (USB) for a second three-year term starting Dec. 11. The board

consists of volunteer farmers who invest soy checkoff funds on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers.

Dee and Doughty are from Pickens County.

Meanwhile, Wayne Bassett of Auburn and Stephen Donaldson of Cullman will represent agriculture on Gov. Robert Bentley's new Alabama Small Business Commission. The group will provide advice for formulating policies related to the economic growth of small businesses.

Bassett is a partner in Beck's Turf Inc. based in Macon County, and Donaldson is a partner in J & R Feed Service based in Cullman County. Members will serve two-year terms, with the option of a two-year reappointment.

## Commodity Corner

### Wheat & Feed Grains

The Alabama Extension 2014 Corn and Wheat Short Course is Dec. 15-16 at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center. Pesticide training points for producers and continuing education credits for Certified Crop Advisors are available. Cost is \$20, and registration is required. For online registration, visit [tinyurl.com/CWShortCourse](http://tinyurl.com/CWShortCourse).

-Carla Hornady, division director

### Dairy and Pork

Alabama youth can test their livestock knowledge at the 4-H Livestock Quizbowl and the new 4-H Skillathon Jan. 9-11 at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana. For details, contact local 4-H agents or Jason P'Pool at (334) 844-1540.

-Guy Hall, divisions director

### Forestry, Wildlife

Forestry stakeholders have created an informal advisory group to help Alabama Forestry Commissioners prioritize goals. The Alabama Farmers Federation, the TREASURE Forest Association and other forestry experts will provide feedback through the group.

Deer hunting season has already started. Check [OutdoorAlabama.com/Hunting](http://OutdoorAlabama.com/Hunting) for the latest changes to bag limits and hunting dates.

-Rick Oates, divisions director

### Peanuts

Four Alabama farmers were chosen for the two-year national Peanut Leadership Program sponsored by Syngenta. They are Marshall Speake of Russell County, Russ Walters of Covington County, Jeremy Sessions of Mobile County and Brian Byrd of Dale County.

-Jim Cravey, interim division director

### Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; Bee & Honey; Horticulture

The new Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) insurance policy is now available for the 2015 crop year. The policy allows producers to insure 50 to 85 percent of farm revenue; makes crop insurance more affordable; and includes fruit and vegetable growers and ranchers. Visit [tinyurl.com/WFRP2015](http://tinyurl.com/WFRP2015) for more information.

-Mac Higginbotham, divisions director

### Equine

Two positions have been created to replace state equine Extension specialist Dr. Cindy McCall, who retired in May. One position will be an Extension specialist; the other will be a lecturer. I serve on the search committee for the Extension position and am confident a high-quality selection will be made.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

## Meat Goat & Sheep Checkoff Approved

The Alabama Meat Goat & Sheep Checkoff program will continue for another five years as 78 percent of producers voted in favor of the program Oct. 21.

Farmers pay 50 cents per head of sheep or goats sold. The funds are used for research, education and promotion for the meat goat and sheep industry.

## Nutrient Management Guidelines Revised

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has released nutrient management guidelines to reflect scientific advances and modern farming practices.

The Alabama Farmers Federation supports the efficient use of nutrients and welcomes the updated guidelines.

"Providing Alabama producers flexibility is the key," said Federation Dairy, Pork and Poultry Division Director Guy Hall. "Producers in the state want to operate in a way that protects the soil and water resources. By providing producers with conservation options, they can select practices that will best fit in their operations."

The key points of the revised standards:

- Bring nutrient application in line with Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) recommendations.
- Eliminate the distinction between north Alabama and south Alabama and establishes a 30-day application standard prior to planting with additional fertilizer application during the growing season.
- Take advantage of Global Position Systems (GPS) and precision ag with regard to the amount of nutrients that can be applied.
- Take into account the latest scientific information and farming practices, like the application of alum and gypsum to poultry litter, in determining the appropriate amounts of poultry litter that can be used as fertilizer.

For more information, contact local NRCS offices.

## TREASURE Forest Recognizes Ag Leaders



The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) recognized Billy and Berta Blackwell with the Bill Moody Award and Jimmy Carlisle with the Gary Fortenberry Partnership Award at the organization's annual meeting in Auburn Oct. 10. From left are ATFA President John Farrow, the Blackwells, Carlisle and Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan.

## National Peanut Festival



Alabama Farmers Federation members received admission discounts and free water bottles Nov. 3-4 at the membership appreciation days at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan. From left are Alfa Insurance Agent Vicky Jimmerson, Federation District 12 Director Steve Dunn and Federation Membership Director Marc Pearson.



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## Foundation Scholarship Applications Available

Applications for the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation's \$1,750 college scholarships, now available online, are due Feb. 1. High school seniors and college students from participating counties seeking an agriculture-related degree at Auburn University or Alabama A&M University may apply.

The Foundation provides \$1,250 in matching funds for every county Farmers Federation that contributes \$500 to the scholarship. Earlier this summer, 52 students from participating counties received scholarships in the program's inaugural year.

"This program is a great return on investment for our county Federations and helps ensure a strong future for agriculture in our state," said Alabama Farmers Federation Director of Organization Mike Tidwell. "We were excited to have 52 counties join the program in its first year and hope to have a scholarship recipient in each county this year."

Visit [AlfaFarmers.org/About/Forms](http://AlfaFarmers.org/About/Forms) for the application and more information.

## Students Attend National FFA Convention



Cottonwood High School FFA students were joined by state leaders in Alabama's booth at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, which ran Oct. 29-Nov. 1. From left are Bradley Meeks; Gage Dykes; Lane Laws; Jon Barganier of Gov. Robert Bentley's office; Ben McCardle; State Sen. Clay Scofield, R-Arab; Cody McCardle; State Board of Education District 6 Representative Cynthia McCarty; Alabama Career Tech Director Phillip Cleveland and Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell.