Dec. 16, 2017

Cultivator

www.AlfaFarmers.org • News from the Alabama Farmers Federation

Tours Headline Young Farmers Meeting

Alabama young farmers will network and learn from some of the best in the business during the Young Farmers Conference in Montgomery March 2-3. Register at AlfaFarmers.org by Jan. 22.

For the second year, the conference features farm tours spanning central and southeast Alabama. Tours will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tour A — Dallas County

- Pearce Catfish Farm
- Orrville Farmers Market
- Bell Place Farms

Tour B — Chambers and Lee counties

- Robertson/Lanier & McKay Cattle Co.
- Auburn University National Poultry Technology Center
- Young's Plant Farm

Tour C — Montgomery and Pike counties

- Parkman Cattle Co.
- Gene & Jana Renfroe's TREASURE Forest
- Steve Stroud's poultry and hay farm

The conference kicks off Friday with Outstanding Young Farm Family (OYFF) judging and a welcome dinner. Entertainment follows featuring Fun Pianos by 176 Keys, a dueling piano show.

During Saturday's closing banquet, OYFF finalists will be announced and a live auction benefiting the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation will take place.

OYFF applications are due Jan. 15. Visit AlfaYoungFarmers.org to learn more.

White Christmas Comes Early For Alabamians

Parts of Alabama were transformed into a weekend winter wonderland Dec. 8-9, with some areas receiving more than six inches of snow. The Federation held a social media frosty farm photo contest, and this landscape from Emily Taylor of St. Clair County was one of four winners. View other snow snapshots on the Federation's Facebook and Instagram channels.

Meeting Focuses On 16 Commodities

Hundreds of farmers will gather Feb. 6-8 to discuss challenges, ideas and the agricultural forecast at the Alabama Farmers Federation's Commodity Organizational Meeting in Montgomery.

Early registration closes Jan. 8 and is $37. An additional fee applies for late registration.

Schedule:

Feb. 6 — Bee & Honey; Beef; Pork; Soybeans; and Wheat & Feed Grains

Feb. 7 — Cotton; Equine; Horticulture; Meat Goat & Sheep; Poultry; and Wildlife

NOTE: The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association board of directors will meet in the afternoon.

Feb. 8 — Catfish; Dairy; Forestry; Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; and Hay & Forage

Over three days, farmers will attend educational seminars and elect state commodity committee members. The Federation's Brian Hardin encouraged county leaders to carefully consider nominees for state committees and county voting delegates who will elect state committee members.

"Our state committees are the farmers' voice," said Hardin, the Federation's Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department director. "Through them, the organization invests in agricultural research, educational programs and promotions. Issues and challenges they identify drive our work in public policy with state agencies, the state Legislature and in Washington, D.C."

Register at AlfaFarmers.org. Contact Deborah Long at (334) 613-4268 for more information.

Wayne Farms Invests $105 Million In Coffee County Poultry Processing Plant

Alabama's No. 1 agricultural industry fueled the largest economic investment in Coffee County history during a Wayne Farms groundbreaking Dec. 12.

The poultry company's $105-million investment will expand and modernize its Enterprise Processing Facility plant in Jack. An additional 400 jobs brings employment to more than 1,600, while production will increase to nearly 400,000 chickens daily. The plant opens in 2019.

Investing in Enterprise is the company's next phase in regional expansion, as its three Wiregrass complexes — Dothan, Enterprise and Union Springs — employ more than 3,000 people. Poultry and row crop farmers will benefit, too, as the plant processes more chickens, increasing demand for locally grown grain.

The 200,000-square-foot expansion adds to the current facility's 120,000 square feet. The plant will include a new processing line with state-of-the-industry technologies, including marination, waterjet portioning, and automated sizing and packaging.

Wayne Farms announced a $105-million expansion investment in its Enterprise Processing Facility in Coffee County Dec. 12. State and regional officials attended the groundbreaking in Jack. From left are Coffee County Commission Chairman Dean Smith, Wayne Farms Senior Director of Fresh Operations Michael Crump, Wayne Farms President and CEO Clint Rivers, Gov. Kay Ivey, Wayne Farms Operations Manager Eddie Fortner and Wayne Farms Area Complex Manager Brad Williams.

Farmer Insight Sought In Irrigation Survey

The Alabama Farmers Federation is conducting a survey to better understand farmers' interests in expanding irrigation in the state.

Visit AlabamaIrrigation.org to access the survey.

Farmers who currently irrigate, or who would like to add irrigation to their farm, are encouraged to complete the survey.

To help collect the most accurate information, note:

- The first page of the survey should only be completed by those currently irrigating crops.
- The second section should only be completed by those who do not currently irrigate.
- The third section should be completed by all respondents.

All information provided will remain confidential.

Federation Focuses On Rural Development In 2018

Rural economic development will be a priority for the Alabama Farmers Federation when the Alabama Legislature convenes Jan. 9.

Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department Director Brian Hardin said legislation and budget allocations are being discussed that would ensure farmers and rural families benefit from the rebounding economy.

Keeping Alabama's tax structure and regulatory environment friendly to farmers and small businesses will help sustain economic development, too, Hardin said. The Federation is meeting with other stakeholder groups to combat rural crime, improve infrastructure, expand broadband internet access and fund agricultural education programs.

Last year, Sen. Clay Scofield, R-Red Hill, introduced a bill to expand rural broadband by offering provider incentives. Federation policy supports increasing access to high-speed internet. The Federation also is working with supporters of the proposed Alabama Rural Jobs Act, aimed at growing rural businesses.

"Leadership changes in Montgomery and Washington are creating opportunities for rural Alabama, and we must be ready to take advantage of those opportunities," Hardin said. "The Federation is closely monitoring the proposed Republican tax plan and any potential impacts it may have on state budgeting. We also will continue to support improving farm-to-market roads and bridges."

Budget priorities include the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) program at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management; Career Tech Initiative; agricultural and citizenship education; irrigation; rural crime; and support for the state's land grant universities, rural health programs, Extension system and agricultural and forestry agencies.

The Federation will welcome lawmakers to the 2018 regular session Jan. 17 with the Taste of Alabama Legislative Reception. About 100 elected officials will attend the event to sample Alabama-grown foods and visit with farmers.

For weekly updates during the legislative session, read the Capitol Connection newsletter at AlfaFarmers.org.

Federation Honors, Elects Alabama Farmer-Leaders

The Alabama Farmers Federation's 96th annual meeting convened in the Capital City Dec. 3-4. More than 1,300 farmers and guests gathered in Montgomery to honor and elect leaders of the state's largest farm organization.

Influential Alabama leaders addressed the crowd during the two-day meeting. U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Haleyville, received the Service to Agriculture Award Sunday, the Federation's highest honor.

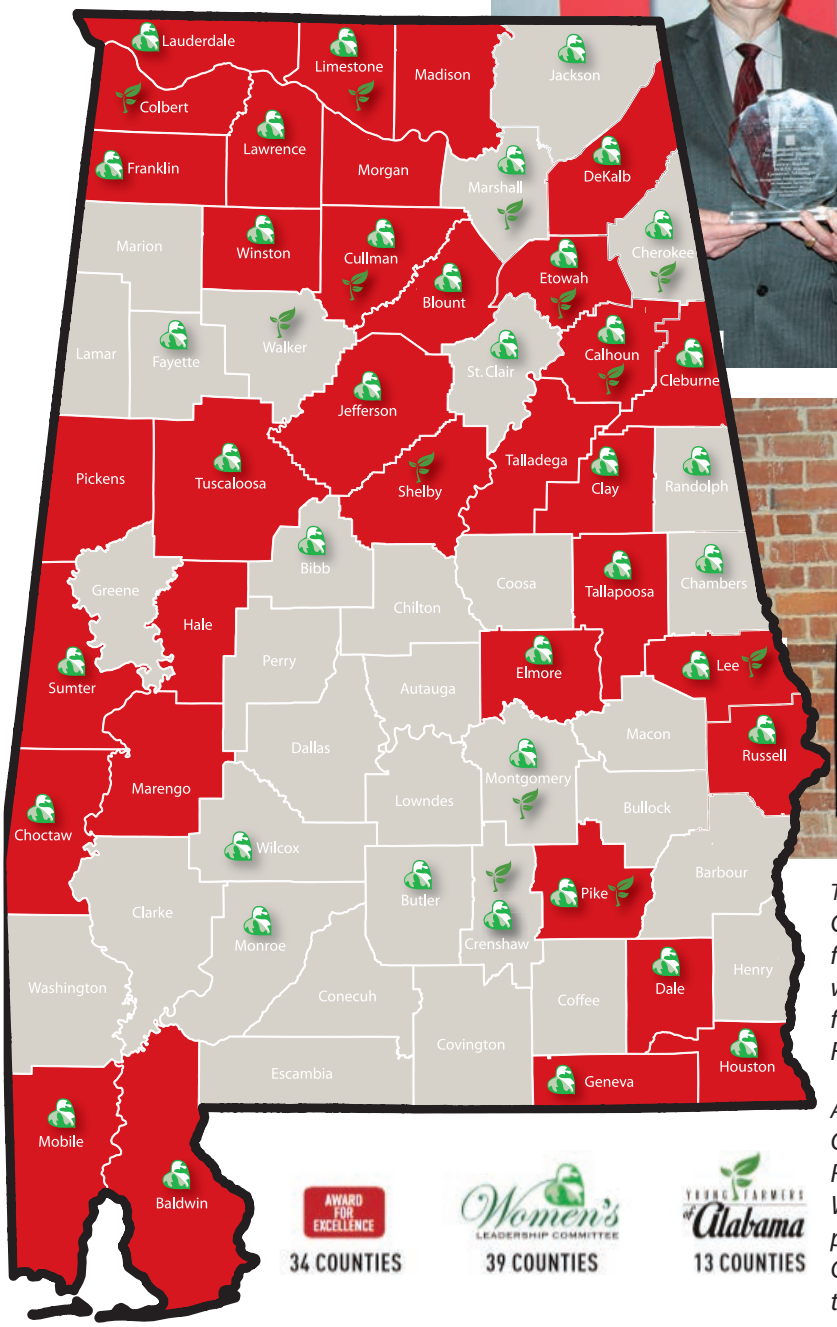
PowerSouth Vice President of External Affairs Horace Horn was presented the Cultivator Award for service to rural Alabama. Gov. Kay Ivey met with FarmPAC donors and addressed the audience during the closing session.

Federation state board of directors, Women's Leadership Committee and Young Farmers Committee leaders were elected during business sessions. Young Farmers contest winners also received prize packages at the meeting.

Live and silent auctions raised $16,485 for the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation.

For a more detailed recap of the two-day event, read the January Neighbors magazine.

Below, 34 county Federations received an Award of Excellence for work in five program areas. Thirty-nine counties were recognized for outstanding Women's Leadership committees, and 13 counties had outstanding Young Farmers programs.



Top, Jerry Baker of Centre received the Federation's Communications Award for Broadcast Journalism, while freelance journalist Loretta Gillespie of Lawrence County was presented the Federation's Communications Award for Print Journalism. From left are Baker, Gillespie and Federation Communications Director Jeff Helms.

Above, the Marshall County Women's Leadership Committee collected the most aluminum pop tabs for Ronald McDonald Houses with a whopping 299.5 pounds. Women's Leadership Division Director Kim Ramsey, left, presented a plaque to Marshall County's Regina Carnes. Collectively, county Women's Leadership committees turned in 1,949 pounds of pop tabs in 2017.

Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan, left, recognized senior leaders during the 96th annual meeting in Montgomery. Front row from left, by county, are Faye Dial, Clay; Charles and Sharon Turner, Geneva; Ashley Truett, Cleburne; and Claude Friday and Catherine White, Talladega; Back row from left are Alvin Stone and Joe Little, Wilcox; Neal Kelly, Tallapoosa; Larry King, Marshall; and Curtis (Sonny) McLellan, Lamar.

Federation Honors Senior, Individual County Leaders

Outstanding county leaders were recognized for service to agriculture, their communities and the Alabama Farmers Federation during its 96th annual meeting in Montgomery Dec. 4. Awards were presented during the second general session.

Members instrumental in establishing or spearheading programs at the county level received Individual Leader awards. Each was nominated by his or her county president. Eleven individuals were honored in areas of Local and Community Service; Commodities; Public Relations and Communications; or Young Farmers. They were, by county and program area: Mary Helen Benford, Chambers, Local and Community Service; Lamar Dewberry, Clay, Commodity Division; Sharon Ledbetter, Cleburne, Public Relations and Communications; Eric Lovvorn, Cleburne, Young Farmers; Earl Culpepper, Dale, Local and Community Service; James Harrell, Houston, Local and Community Service; Daniel Mullenix, Lee, Young Farmers; John DeLoach, Shelby, Young Farmers; Phillip Hunter, Shelby, Commodity Division; Amy Stephens, Talladega, Young Farmers; and Vickie Watkins, Tallapoosa, Local and Community Service.

Eleven senior leaders also were recognized. Each served as a county president, State Women's Leadership Committee chair or state board member and is over 70 years of age. They are, by county, Faye Dial, Clay; Ashley Truett, Cleburne; Charles Turner, Geneva; Sharon Turner, Geneva; Curtis (Sonny) McLellan, Lamar; Larry King, Marshall; Claude Friday, Talladega; Catherine White, Talladega; Neal Kelly, Tallapoosa; Alvin Stone, Wilcox; and Joe Little, Wilcox.

Individual leaders were recognized by Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan during the annual meeting Front row from left, by county and program area, are James Harrell, Houston, Local and Community Service; Sharon Ledbetter, Cleburne, Public Relations and Communications; Vickie Watkins, Tallapoosa, Local and Community Service; and Amy Stephens, Talladega, Young Farmers. Back row from left are Eric Lovvorn, Cleburne, Young Farmers; Lamar Dewberry, Clay, Commodity Division; Phillip Hunter, Shelby, Commodity Division; John DeLoach, Shelby, Young Farmers; and Daniel Mullenix, Lee, Young Farmers. Not pictured are Mary Helen Benford, Chambers, Local and Community Service; and Earl Culpepper, Dale, Local and Community Service.

Events & Deadlines

- **January-February** - Financial Analysis workshops
  - *aces.edu/lender*
- **January-April** - Alabama Master Naturalist program training
  - *aces.edu/natural-resources/amn/*
- **Jan. 5-10** - American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention in Nashville
- **Jan. 8** - Early registration closes for Commodity Organizational Meeting in Montgomery Feb. 6-8
  - *tinyurl.com/CommOrg18*
- **Jan. 9** - Legislative session begins
  - *Legislative preview available in the January Neighbors magazine*
- **Jan. 18** - Precision Ag Workshop in Birmingham
  - *Register at bit.ly/2yyR1jv*
- **Jan. 26** - Farm of Distinction applications due
  - *AlabamaFarmCity.org*
- **March 2-3** - Young Farmers Conference in Montgomery
  - *Registration closes Jan. 22 at tinyurl.com/YoungFarmers18*

Court Grants EPA Call To Delay CERCLA Reporting

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has postponed reporting requirements under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) until Jan. 22.

Farmers will be required to report the release of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide if releases exceed 100 pounds in 24 hours.

The requirement stems from an April 2017 decision where the court sided with environmentalists to strike down a rule exempting farms from reporting releases.

OBITUARY

Earl Acker of Spring Garden died Dec. 9. He was 89.

Acker served on the Alabama Farmers Federation and Cherokee County Farmers Federation boards.

He was preceded in death by Margaret Love Acker, his wife of 64 years. He is survived by two sons, two daughters, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Commodity Corner

Peanuts

The Alabama-Florida Peanut Trade Show is Feb. 8 in Dothan. More than 80 exhibitors will be present, and Marshall Lamb of the National Peanut Research Lab will speak to growers about the crop outlook and market status. Learn more at alpeanuts.com.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod

Boxwood blight has been detected at a North Carolina nursery that sold cuttings to an Alabama farm selling wreaths and garland. Alabama's Department of Agriculture & Industries (ADAI) encourages nurseries, florists and homeowners to dispose of boxwood holiday decorations in household garbage. Avoid using clippings for garden mulch. Contact ADAI's Christel Harden at (334) 240-7225 to learn more.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Forestry

The White Oak Initiative, a new focus on hardwood management, has started in the Southeast. With fire exclusion used to manage hardwood forests, the white oak is declining. This initiative is an effort to unite academia, state and federal agencies, landowners and industry leaders to reverse this key species' decline.

-William Green, division director

Beef

Observations and reports from fall production sales reflect an optimistic outlook among Alabama beef farmers. Disciplined fed cattle marketings for most of 2017 kept live cattle inventories manageable. Farmers should anticipate more typical seasonal feeder calf prices in 2018. Planning to wean and precondition calves now will help manage risk from a likely larger supply of feeders in 2018.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Wheat & Feed Grains, Cotton and Soybean

Alabama Extension will hold Alabama Ag Outlook meetings across the state in January. Updates on Alabama's current agricultural situation in the state, as well as 2018 expectations, will be provided. Learn more at tinyurl.com/AgOutlook18.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Poultry

Alabama joined 11 other states filing suit against California's unconstitutional egg law Dec. 4. The law prohibits California farmers from selling eggs in the state unless each hen has 116+ square inches of floor space. Non-California farmers shipping eggs are required to follow the law, as well. States claim the law costs consumers $351 million per year.

-Guy Hall, division director

Alabama Farmers Get Ag-tive

- **Annie Dee** of Pickens County was reappointed to the United Soybean Board Dec. 4 for a third three-year term. State Soybean Committee Chair **Colt Clemmons** of Lauderdale County is an alternate director.
- **Chad Henderson and Stuart Sanderson** of Limestone County received first place in the state division of the 2017 National Wheat Yield Contest. Henderson's irrigated winter wheat yielded 101.78 bushels an acre, while Sanderson's dryland wheat yielded 107.83 bushels an acre.
- **The Alabama Catfish Producers** helped sponsor an industry and research update in Demopolis Dec. 6. More than a dozen researchers and presenters attended the meeting.
- **Ellie Isbell** of Colbert County won the Auburn University Young Farmers Discussion Meet Nov. 9. She competes at the national contest in Reno, Nevada, in February.
- **An exclusive Ford sweepstakes** will allow one Alabama Farmers Federation member to cruise into a two-year lease of a 2018 F-150 truck. Enter at fordspecialoffer.com/farmbureau/sweeps.
- **Gavin and Ethan Rankins** of Lee County recorded the two highest written test scores at the National 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl. Alongside teammates Rice Nichols and Nathan Gullatt, the Rankins finished second place overall.

Germans Pick Up Alabama Ag Facts

The Alabama Farmers Federation hosted six German visitors Nov. 16-17 through the McCloy Leadership Mission in Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Security. They toured a gin, turf farm and Auburn University research farms, visited the Federation home office and met with Federation staff including Nate Jaeger, right.

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College Scholarship Apps Open Through Feb. 1

Students seeking degrees from Alabama institutions may apply for scholarships awarded through the Alfa Foundation and the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation (AFAF). Applications are due Feb. 1.

AFAF $1,750 scholarships may be awarded to one student per county. The student must be seeking an agriculture- or forestry-related degree from Auburn University or Alabama A&M University. Auburn students should also apply for scholarships through AUSOM (Auburn University Scholarship Opportunity Manager).

Learn more at AlfaFarmers.org. Applicants must be an Alabama Farmers Federation member or be a dependent of a Federation member.

In its fifth year, the Alfa Foundation Scholarship Program will award 100 scholarships worth $1,000 to students studying at an Alabama college, university or technical school. Applicants must be Alabama Farmers Federation members.

Learn more at AlfaInsurance.com.

Durbin Honored For Exceptional Achievements

Chilton County farmer Jimmy Durbin received the Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association (AFVGA) Exceptional Achievement Award at the organization's annual conference and trade show in Clanton Nov. 16-17. From left are AFVGA President Bobby Boozer, Durbin and AFVGA Executive Director Mac Higginbotham. Nearly 200 producers and industry representatives attended workshops and networked with 40 exhibitors at the conference.