

Cultivator

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Cotton Amendment Approved In Runoff

Alabama voters overwhelmingly supported Amendment 1 on the cotton checkoff in the July 15 primary runoff elections. Passage of the amendment means cotton farmers may hold a referendum vote on making participation in the cotton checkoff automatic.

"The Federation is extremely thankful for our farmers who worked hard to get the word out about the importance of the cotton checkoff and this amendment," said Alabama Farmers Federation Cotton Division Director Carla Hornady. "Now we will focus our efforts on scheduling the referendum."

The cotton checkoff supports research, educational and promotional activities.

Also in the primary runoff, the nine statewide and legislative candidates endorsed by the Federation won their races.

Republicans John Merrill for Secretary of State, Jim Zeigler for State Auditor, Tim Melson (SD 1), Greg Albritton (SD 22) and Clyde Chambliss (SD 30) won but will face challengers in the November general election.

Federation-endorsed candidates who won and are unopposed in the general election are Republicans Chip Beeker for Public Service Commission Seat 2, Shay Shelnuttt (SD 17) and Arnold Mooney (HD 43) and Democrat Rep. Ralph Howard (HD 72).

In Congressional District 6, Federation-endorsed candidate Paul Demarco lost to Alabama Policy Institute co-founder Gary Palmer.



Talladega County farmer Bob Luker inspects his corn crop after heavy rains flooded his fields last summer. The EPA's proposed water rule would expand the definition of "waters of the U.S." to include previously unregulated areas such as flooded fields, ponds, ditches and puddles.

Water Rule Comment Period Extended

Farmers now have until Oct. 20 to submit public comments on a revised water rule proposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The proposal would expand the definition of the "waters of the U.S." to include previously unregulated areas including ponds, ditches and puddles. Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries John McMillan submitted comments against the rule to the EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee before the group's July 10 meeting in Atlanta.

"Farmers, ranchers, landowners and business owners in Alabama are extremely concerned about this proposed rule," McMillan said. "It appears the agencies are proposing to regulate every land feature that captures rainwater that eventually flows to a water historically considered navigable. Alabama farmers consider our state's waters a blessing, but this rule

would turn that into a curse of sorts."

The proposed water rule was also debated by the U.S. House of Representative's Science, Space and Technology Committee July 9, where U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Alabama, submitted a letter from Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell opposing the rule.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy is currently on tour, hosting meetings in different states to explain the rule. McCarthy has been recorded saying opposition to the proposal is "silly" and "ludicrous."

According to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), the proposal could require farmers to obtain permits for everyday farm activities.

To submit a comment on the rule, visit AlfaFarmers.org, and click on the Legislative Action Center. AFBF has more resources and information on the rule's negative impacts to agriculture online at DitchTheRule.Fb.org.

Polaris Offers Discounts To Federation Members

Polaris Industries Inc., is now offering discounts to Alabama Farmers Federation members through the Farm Bureau Member Advantage program.

"This program provides another outstanding example of how it pays to be a member of the Alabama Farmers Federation and Farm Bureau," said Federation President Jimmy Parnell. "This generous special purchase program from Polaris will help our members save money on high-quality, all-terrain vehicles that can stand up to rugged use on farms."

Eligible Federation members receive a \$300 per unit discount on all Polaris Utility and Sport Vehicles, \$200 per unit on all All-Terrain Vehicles and \$300 per unit on all GEM Electric Vehicles.

Members are eligible for the discounts 30 days after joining the Federation. Discounts are available for the purchase of specified Polaris off-road vehicles without exclusion in states that participate in the Polaris program.

Visit fbverify.com/Polaris to take advantage of this program. A membership number and zip code are required to confirm eligibility. A certificate will be made available online that must be printed and taken to a dealership. Certificates expire after 60 days.

Classes Provide Cottage Food Law Certification

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is offering food safety training courses to fulfill requirements of the new Alabama Cottage Food Law.

Training is scheduled for July 23 in Camden, Aug. 12 in Selma, Aug. 14 in Hayneville and Aug. 26 in Clanton. Cost is \$25. For registration and directions, contact Janice Hall at (334) 415-8658.

The law allows for the sale of non-hazardous, homemade foods. Sellers are required to attend a food safety course.

"This opportunity, combined with proper food handling, can lead to great products and give farmers an additional revenue source," said Mac Higginbotham, Horticulture Division director for the Alabama Farmers Federation.

Foods covered in the law include cakes, cookies, dried herbs, jams and jellies. Completing the state ServSafe class also fulfills the training requirement.

A State Strategic Plan For Agriculture



The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries hosted the Alabama Agriculture and Strategic Plan Initiative Conference at the state Capitol July 15. Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan and Alabama Agribusiness Council Executive Director Leigha Cauthen were among the featured speakers at the event.

New Driver's License Requirement Starts Dec. 1

Alabama Farmers Federation members may soon need to apply for a new driver's license.

Starting Dec. 1, people born after Dec. 1, 1964, will be required to have a Secure, Trusted and Reliable Identification, or STAR, ID for domestic flights and entrance to certain regulated federal facilities. People born before Dec. 1, 1964 have until Dec. 1, 2017, to comply with the regulations.

"This new requirement will affect a lot of active Federation members who travel frequently," said Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan. "Members who meet the age requirement for the Dec. 1 deadline and plan to attend the 2015 American Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting in California or next year's Washington Legislative Conference should consider starting this process to ensure easy and safe travels."

A valid U.S. passport may be accepted in place of a STAR ID for domestic flights and entering federal buildings.

Residents cannot obtain the STAR ID at county probate offices. Instead, the new license is issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS) Driver's License Examining Offices in each county.

A birth certificate, Social Security card and two documents verifying place of residence are required to apply. The cost is the same as an Alabama driver's license or non-driver ID: \$23.50 for a renewal and \$18.50 for a duplicate.

The new license is required by the REAL ID Act of 2005. While the act includes the 2014 and 2017 deadlines, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced it will implement enforcement no sooner than 2016.

For more details, call 877-567-1045 or visit the DPS website at dps.alabama.gov.

Alabama Voices Of Agriculture On RFD-TV

Catch Alabama's segment of Farm Bureau's "Voices of Agriculture" on RFD-TV July 23 at 5:30 p.m. Features include:

- Rock Bridge Canyon Equestrian Park in Franklin County
- Agricultural Leaders for Alabama (A.L.F.A.) program
- Quail Restoration Project at Raymond Shaw's Coosa County farm
- Junior Beef Exposition Showmanship Contest
- Alabama's 2014 Farm of the Year, Hunter Trees in Talladega County

Apply For Heritage, Century Farm Honor

The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) will accept applications for the 2014 Alabama Century and Heritage Farm program through Aug. 29.

The Century Farm designation is awarded to farms that have been in the same family continuously for at least 100 years and are currently used for farming activities. Farms must be at least 40 acres.

A Heritage Farm must have been used as a family farm for at least 100 years and possess historical significance including at least one structure standing for 40 years or more. Farms must be at least 40 acres, and the owner must live in Alabama.

Applications are available online at agi.alabama.gov.

OBITUARIES

Albert McDonald, a member of the Madison County Farmers Federation board of directors, died July 6. He was 83.

McDonald served as a state senator, state agriculture commissioner and state director of the USDA Farm Service Agency. He also received the Service to Agriculture Award, the Alabama Farmers Federation's highest honor.

Memorials may be made to the Madison United Methodist Church, 127 Church St., Madison, AL 35758; The American Cancer Society, 3000 Bob Wallace Ave. SW, Huntsville, AL 35805; or the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, 101 Sivley Rd. SW, Huntsville, AL 35801.

Ned Thomas Ellis Sr., a member of the Lowndes County Farmers Federation, died July 7. He was 82.

Auburn University's College of Agriculture honored Ellis in 2008 by inducting him into the Ag Hall of Honor.

Memorials may be made to the Alabama Cattleman's Scholarship Fund, 201 S. Bainbridge St., Montgomery, AL 36102 or Fellowship of Christian Athletes, P.O. Box 230685, Montgomery, AL 36123.

George William "Billy" Smelley Sr., a former Talladega County Farmers Federation president, died July 6. He was 86.

Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church of Greensboro or Alacare Home Health and Hospice.

Commodity Corner

Horticulture; Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod

Boxwood Blight was recently identified in two residential landscapes in the metro-Atlanta area. There is no cure for this disease. Farmers or landscapers who notice damaged boxwoods should submit a sample of the plant to Dr. Kassie Conner at the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. For more information, visit aces.edu/dept/plantdiagnosticlab.

-Mac Higginbotham, divisions director

Meat Goat & Sheep

The "Lamb By The River" event during the W.C. Handy Music Festival in Florence is July 24 from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church. Chef Kevin Kilburn will cook, and local recording artist Rachel Wammack will perform. Seating is limited, and tickets are \$10. To reserve tickets, email handyfest@bellsouth.net or call (256) 766-9719.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Pork; Poultry

Nationally, feed prices are lower than two years ago thanks to a large corn crop in 2013 and this year's anticipated good corn harvest. All major sources of protein, including chicken and pork, are selling at higher prices in recent months, according to a report in *Mississippi Business Journal*.

-Guy Hall, divisions director

Wheat & Feed Grains; Soybeans; Cotton

The latest USDA Alabama Crop Progress and Condition report shows 96 percent of soybean fields are planted, and the wheat harvest is essentially complete. There is no drought in the state, but the extreme northwest and southeast portions of Alabama are abnormally dry.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Forestry

The "Prescribed Burning of Private Lands" workshop is July 24 in the Alfa Environmental Hall at the University of West Alabama from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Registration is \$10 and includes lunch.

The Alabama Prescribed Fire Council's annual meeting is Aug. 28 at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana. Lunch is included in the \$40 registration fee. Both events offer continuing education credits.

-Rick Oates, division director

Peanuts

Peanut farmers in Alabama unanimously approved the continuation of a statewide peanut checkoff program with a June 17 vote. State law requires producers vote on the program every three years. Funds are collected at harvest and used for education, promotion and research.

-Jim Cravey, interim division director

Alabama Cattle Farmers Tour Minnesota



The 2014 Alabama Farmers Federation Beef Tour June 30-July 4 took more than 50 participants to the "Land of 10,000 Lakes." The Alabama cattle farmers stopped at more than a dozen sites, including commercial and purebred cattle farms, feed lots and dairy farms in Minnesota.

Young Farmers Chairmen Meet



County chairmen of the Alabama Farmers Federation Young Farmers committees visited the main office in Montgomery July 15 to learn more about the organization. Above, State Young Farmers committee member Stan Usery, right, talks with county Young Farmers chairmen Chris Holoway of Blount County and Wendy Yeager of Dallas County.



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FAA Rule Grounds Farm Use Of Model Aircraft

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently released a rule clarification stating model aircraft may only be used by hobbyists. Commercial use of the machines, also known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones, is currently prohibited.

This leaves many businessmen, including farmers, waiting on the FAA to institute rules and regulations for the safe integration of UAVs into commercial use. Congress has given the FAA a deadline of September 2015 to develop those guidelines.

"There seems to be a lot of promise in using UAVs in agriculture," said Mitt Walker, Alabama Farmers Federation's director of National Legislative Programs. "As the FAA develops rules, we will submit comments and make sure agricultural interests are represented in the process."

The Alabama Farmers Federation does not have policy concerning UAVs, but American Farm Bureau Federation policy supports the use of UAVs for commercial purposes.

Learning Leadership And Having Fun



Through workshops, seminars and relay events, Alabama high school students learned the importance of teamwork and effective communication at the Alabama Farmers Federation's Youth Leadership Conference. Ninety-five participants honed their leadership skills during the three-day conference at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana June 30-July 2.