

# Cultivator

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## Commodity Director Changes Announced

The Alabama Farmers Federation filled out its commodity director lineup following assignments announced last month.

William Green is the Forestry and Wildlife Resources Divisions director, as well as Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) executive director.

National Legislative Programs Director Mitt Walker will also lead the Catfish Division, a position he previously held from 2005-2011.

"We met with farmers and forest owners to understand their needs and identified directors to help achieve their goals," said the Federation's Brian Hardin. "William already did a good job with the ATFA and feral swine issues with former director Rick Oates. Mitt is well respected by Alabama catfish producers and industry leaders."

Green will continue to be responsible for feral swine, land use, property rights, endangered species and invasive species issues. He interned with the Federation before being named commodity director in April 2016.

A Pintlala native, Green is a 2014 Auburn University wildlife sciences graduate. He and wife Mallory live in Montgomery.

Clarke County native Walker will retain responsibility for international trade issues, the Farm Bill and policy development and implementation.

Walker graduated in environmental analysis and management at Troy University. He and wife Brandi have three children, Olivia, Addi Leigh and Ford. They live in Montgomery.

## Teachers Net Knowledge At Summer Institute



Ninety kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers attended the Alabama Ag in the Classroom Summer Institute in Tuscaloosa and Hale counties May 31-June 2. Teachers toured Acker Cattle Co., Anders Row Crop Farm and Drury Catfish Farm, where they met farmers like Bubba Drury (pictured). They also attended workshops and received over \$250 worth of classroom materials.

## Rain Postpones Planting, Concerns Climb

Continued rainfall and waterlogged fields have prevented some Alabama farmers from completing planting, and forecasts show little respite from the rain.

In south Alabama, more than 4 inches of rain have already fallen this June in Fairhope, said Alabama Extension's Kim Wilkins. She estimates 15-20 percent of southwest Alabama fields destined for cotton and soybeans are not planted.

"For me, it's starting to get more critical because we'd like to have finished planting by the first week of June," said Wilkins, an agronomic crops regional Extension agent. "The few days it hasn't rained, it's so wet we can't get in the field."

As of mid-June, Escambia County farmer Kevin Holland had 25 percent of his cotton and peanut crops left to plant. He said he could wrap up planting with a few good, rain-free days.

"Timeliness is everything," Holland

said. "The difference between a good farmer and a great farmer is two days."

About 300 miles north of Holland's farm, some Jackson County farmers have nearly 500 acres to plant or replant due to heavy rains. Woodville's Mike Neal replanted about 450 acres of soybeans after 10 inches of rain fell in one week.

"You can't control Mother Nature," he said. "It's just one factor farmers have to deal with."

Rain is affecting planted crops, too, since farmers are unable to maneuver equipment into saturated fields to spray for weeds or pests.

Effects could carry over into harvest, with fewer daylight hours and the possibility of early frost. Tropical storms brewing in the Gulf of Mexico are also a concern. Harvest could be delayed up to a month if heavy rainfall continues into autumn, Neal said.

## Sylacauga Alfa Office Tops Pop Tab Collections



With 132.2 pounds collected, Alfa Service Center 467 in Sylacauga won Talladega County's annual pop tab collecting contest June 16. The tabs will help fund Ronald McDonald Houses in Alabama. From left are Agent Ronnie Craddock, CSR Robin Eddings, CSR Michelle Drummonds and Agent Daren Holland.

## Stored Grain Is Focus Of Workshops In July

**W**orkshops providing Alabama farmers advice to manage stored grain pests are set for July.

Participants will observe grain storage systems, take part in hands-on demonstrations and interact with stored grain experts. Topics include pest biology, moisture and temperature management, bin monitoring systems and sanitation.

The Alabama Wheat & Feed Grain Producers are sponsoring the events July 17 in Headland, July 18 in Atmore, July 19 in Marion Junction and July 20 in Madison.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/storedgrain](http://tinyurl.com/storedgrain).

## OBITUARY

**Jack Lavender Howell** of Gordo died May 1. He was 86.

Howell was a Pickens County Farmers Federation board member.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Octavia; daughter Beverly Hall (Tim); sons Greg Howell (Pam), Richard Howell (Jackie) and Byron Howell; and eight grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Gordo First United Methodist Church Memorial Fund, P. O. Box 343, Gordo, AL 35466.

## Nursery Growers To Discuss Crop Insurance In Mobile

A meeting to gather input from nursery growers on a proposed alternative crop insurance program will be in Mobile June 28 from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at the Mobile County Extension Office.

Visit [tinyurl.com/nurserygrowers](http://tinyurl.com/nurserygrowers) for more information.

## Pork Contest Entries Due July 15

Winning recipes in county Pork Cooking Contests should be submitted by July 15 to receive prize money reimbursement from the Alabama Pork Producers. Visit [tinyurl.com/porkform17](http://tinyurl.com/porkform17) to submit information.

A statewide winner will be named and receive \$100. Top recipes will be featured in Neighbors magazine. Submit entries at [tinyurl.com/porkcontest17](http://tinyurl.com/porkcontest17).

Questions? Contact Guy Hall at [ghall@alfafarmers.org](mailto:ghall@alfafarmers.org).

## Southeastern Hay Contest Winner To Receive Equipment For 2018

The Southeastern Hay Contest seeks to showcase farmers growing top-quality hay. Entries are due Sept. 21.

The grand prize includes use of a new Massey Ferguson rake or mower for 2018, plus \$1,000. Additionally, seven category winners will be announced at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia, Oct. 17.

For contest rules and the entry form, visit [sehaycontest.com](http://sehaycontest.com).

## Peach Production Plummet

Few chill hours, effects of the 2016 drought and a late frost have led to below-average peach production in Alabama this year.

In 2016, peach production was 7 million pounds. Growers estimate Alabama lost about 75 percent of its crop this year.

## Fruit And Vegetable Industry Has A Healthy Impact On Economy

Alabama's fruit, vegetable and nut industries have an economic impact of \$161.5 million and are responsible for 1,121 jobs in the state, according to a recent Auburn University report.

The state ranks seventh in the U.S. in sweet potato sales, eighth in pecan sales and 12th in watermelon sales.

## Home Office Updates

- **The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association license plate** is now available at county licensing offices. Pre-commitment redemption vouchers may be used throughout 2017.
- **Chasity Collier** of Mobile County was named Alabama's Teacher of the Year in May. Alfa Insurance presented her the year's use of a car with insurance paid for by the Federation.
- **Alabama FFA Convention** was June 7-9 in Montgomery. The Federation sponsored a career show booth for 1,500 students and teachers. Former Federation Executive Director John Dorrill, longtime DeKalb County Farmers Federation President Waymon Buttram and Federation Young Farmers Director Jennifer Himgurg were inducted into the Wall of Honor.
- **Forty-nine counties** will have hosted Federation President Jimmy Parnell for meetings in the first half of 2017.
- **State committee meetings** were in full swing last month. Beef; Hay & Forage; Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; Equine and Meat Goat & Sheep committees met, as did the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association board.

## Commodity Corner

### Wheat & Feed Grains

Southern rust has been spotted in corn at the Gulf Coast Research Extension Center in Fairhope. Common, but not southern, rust has been found in Brewton, Headland and Tallassee.

-Carla Hornady, division director

### Meat Goat & Sheep

Many educational events regarding sheep and goat management are available this summer. Alabama Extension is offering workshops, field days and symposia about internal parasite control and grazing management for small ruminants. From statewide conferences to local workshops, there are excellent chances to learn to be better herdsman. Visit [tinyurl.com/smallruminants](http://tinyurl.com/smallruminants) and [tinyurl.com/sheepgoats](http://tinyurl.com/sheepgoats) for more information.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

### Wildlife

In certain areas, summertime means more frequent bear sightings. These omnivores look for any food available, which often means garbage, wildlife feeders and pet food. To avoid unwanted visitors, purchase bear-proof trash cans and remove feeders and pet food for two to three weeks. Report bear sightings at [game.dcnr.alabama.gov/BlackBear](http://game.dcnr.alabama.gov/BlackBear).

-William Green, division director

### Poultry

Despite President Trump's recent call for rollbacks in relations with Cuba, the American Farm Bureau Federation believes U.S. agricultural and medical exports will change little because of an exception in the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. Alabama poultry comprised 12 percent of U.S. poultry exports to Cuba from 2012-2016, valued at more than \$172 million.

-Guy Hall, division director

### Peanuts

This fall, Golden Peanut and Tree Nuts will begin the company's third expansion in Blakely, Georgia, at its peanut flour plant. This project increases efficiency and capacity by adding storage for raw materials, manufacturing supplies and finished products.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

### Horticulture

The Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (AFVGA) sponsored a meeting in Cullman for strawberry growers June 8. Attendees learned about variety and crop protection trials, and Virginia Tech Extension's Allen Straw spoke on site selection methods, irrigation and more. Visit [tinyurl.com/strawberries17](http://tinyurl.com/strawberries17) to view the presentation.

-Caleb Hicks, AFVGA intern

## Upcoming Events

- **June-December** - Quickbooks Classes for Farmers
  - Visit [aces.edu/go/734](http://aces.edu/go/734) for locations and dates
- **June 30** - American Farm Bureau Federation Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge deadline
  - [strongruralamerica.com](http://strongruralamerica.com)
- **July 13** - Sunbelt Field Day in Moultrie, Georgia
  - [sunbeltexpo.com](http://sunbeltexpo.com)
- **July 14** - Stocker Cattle Shortcourse in Greensboro
  - RSVP to Brenda Glover at (334) 321-8828 by July 7
- **July 20-22** - Southern Peanut Growers Conference
  - Early registration closes June 30 at [southernpeanutfarmers.org](http://southernpeanutfarmers.org)
- **Aug. 1** - Farm Service Agency County Committee nominations due
  - [fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://fsa.usda.gov/elections)
- **Aug. 3-5** - Commodity Producers Conference/Alabama Farm Expo
  - [alfafarmers.org](http://alfafarmers.org)
- **Aug. 9** - Farming with Beneficial Insects for Pest Control Shortcourse in Clanton
  - [tinyurl.com/insectcontrol](http://tinyurl.com/insectcontrol)
- **Aug. 12** - Auburn University Beef Cattle Conference
  - [aub.ie/beef](http://aub.ie/beef)

## Rounding Up Fun At The Special Needs Rodeo



About 400 students from special needs facilities in Chambers, Lee and Tallapoosa counties attended the Chambers County Sheriff's Office Special Needs Rodeo May 18. They enjoyed rodeo events, games and a petting zoo, which the Chambers County Farmers Federation and Young Farmers Committee hosted. Chambers County Young Farmer Chandler Langley, right, talked about horses with the students.

## Law Student, Samford Senior Start Internships

Faulkner University law student John Allen Nichols and Samford University senior Thomason Bryan round out the Alabama Farmers Federation's crop of summer interns.

Nichols, a 2016 Auburn University poultry science graduate, is a public policy intern. The Trussville native is assisting with state and national legislative program and policy development initiatives.

Nichols is a former Jefferson County Farmers Federation scholarship recipient.

Bryan, who is majoring in communication studies, is working on promotional projects, conducting research and assisting with the "Simply Southern TV" show.

The Montgomery County native is a graduate of Trinity Presbyterian School.

## Hicks Has A Berry Good Farm Visit



Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (AFVGA) intern Caleb Hicks, left, visited AFVGA board member Jimmy Witt June 9. Hicks and Witt discussed plant varieties and sampled berries on Witt's Blount County farm. This summer, Hicks is traveling the state meeting board members and promoting the fruit and vegetable industry.



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## Agricultural Trade Hits National Spotlight

Thanks to a recent announcement on export protocols, Chinese consumers will soon savor the flavor of U.S. beef.

The countries reached a deal last month to reopen the Chinese market for U.S. exports for the first time since 2003. China imported \$2.5 billion worth of beef from other countries in 2016.

The agreement applies to cattle born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S.; cattle imported from Mexico or Canada and raised and slaughtered in the U.S.; or cattle imported from Mexico or Canada for direct slaughter.

President Trump also announced a shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba June 16. There are no direct new restrictions on U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba.

The comment period for North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiations closed. The Federation submitted comments about resolving the softwood timber dispute with Canada, modernizing biotech rules and lessening the impact of imported fruits and vegetables when U.S. products are in season.

## Tour Beefs Up On Pennsylvania Cattle Industry



Nearly 50 Alabama beef buffs visited over 20 Pennsylvania cattle farms during the Beef Tour June 19-23. The tour included farms of various sizes, as well as Penn State teaching units. Day 1 began at Lisnageer Farm, above, which exports seed stock cattle worldwide. From left are Autauga County's Win Parmer, Walker County's Wilene Sherer, Federation President Jimmy Parnell and Autauga County's Bill Lipscomb.