

# Cultivator

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## FarmPAC Endorses Runoff Candidates

Eleven FarmPAC-endorsed candidates face opposition in the July 15 primary runoff elections.

In the June 3 primary, the three congressional incumbents endorsed by FarmPAC won their races, while five of the six FarmPAC-endorsed candidates for statewide offices won or will be in the runoff.

FarmPAC endorsed three additional candidates after the June 3 primary: Jim Zeigler, state auditor; Tim Melson, State Senate District 1; and Arnold Mooney, State House District 43. Endorsements were recommended by county leaders following reviews of the candidates' qualifications.

Endorsed candidates in the July 15 runoff elections are:

- Paul DeMarco (R), Congressional District 6
- John Merrill (R), Secretary of State
- Jim Zeigler (R), State Auditor
- Chip Beeker (R), Public Service Commission, Place 2
- Tim Melson (R), State Senate District 1
- Shay Shelnutt (R), State Senate District 17
- Greg Albritton (R), State Senate District 22
- Clyde Chambliss Jr. (R), State Senate District 30
- Arnold Mooney (R), State House District 43
- David Faulkner (R), State House District 46
- Rep. Ralph A. Howard (D), State House District 72

The July issue of *Neighbors* will include the Federation's Voter's Guide.



Alabama cotton farmers have supported the state's checkoff program since it began in the '70s. An amendment on the July 15 ballot would allow farmers to hold a referendum on making checkoff participation automatic. Currently, only 7 percent of producers request a refund.

## Cotton Checkoff Amendment On Ballot

The July 15 runoff ballot includes an amendment for the state's cotton checkoff. Cotton producers are asking the people of Alabama to choose cotton and vote "yes" on Amendment 1.

The provision would allow Alabama cotton farmers to decide if their current voluntary checkoff should become automatic. The Alabama Farmers Federation and its State Cotton Committee support the amendment.

"The research and cotton policies funded by the Alabama cotton checkoff program have kept our family farm in business," said Autauga County farmer Jimmy Sanford, who serves as chairman of the Alabama Cotton Commission.

The commission, a board of 11 cotton farmers who serve as unpaid volunteers, determines distribution of checkoff funds.

For more than 30 years, Alabama farmers have supported the cotton checkoff by paying a self-imposed fee per bale of cotton sold to fund cotton research,

educational and promotional activities.

Most notably, checkoff money helped fund research for the boll weevil eradication program. More recent research has helped farmers reduce yield losses from pests such as stinkbugs and nematodes.

"All Alabama cotton farmers have benefitted from research funded by the cotton checkoff with increased yields and improved environmental practices," said Federation Cotton Division Director Carla Hornady.

Currently, the checkoff contains a refund policy, but only 7 percent of farmers request refunds. However, those farmers still have access to and benefit from checkoff-funded research and promotion without paying into the program.

If the July 15 amendment passes, the commission could schedule a vote for cotton farmers to decide on the change to the checkoff program.

Visit ChooseCotton.com for more information.

## Scholarships Available From Alfa Foundation

The Alfa Foundation plans to award \$50,000 in scholarships for students at Alabama colleges, universities and technical schools. Applicants must be members of the Alabama Farmers Federation, and applications are due June 30.

The program is open to high school seniors and post-secondary undergraduates enrolled or planning to enroll in an Alabama two- or four-year college, university or technical school. The application is available at [AlfaInsurance.com](http://AlfaInsurance.com).

Scholarship funds will be awarded in late August and may be used for tuition, fees, books and supplies required for coursework.

Scholarships will be awarded based on academic record; demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities; honors; work experience; and statement of goals and aspirations. A minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale is required.

Federation membership is available online at [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org), at Alabama Alfa Insurance offices, or by calling 1-800-964-2532.

The Alfa Foundation Scholarship Program is administered by Scholarship America®. No officers or employees of the Alfa Foundation are involved in the selection process. Questions about the scholarship program should be addressed to: Alfa Foundation Scholarship Program, Scholarship Management Services, One Scholarship Way, Saint Peter, MN 56082 or (507) 931-1682.

## Peanut Checkoff Vote Set For June 17

The Alabama Peanut Producers Association (APPA) is asking peanut farmers to vote "yes" on the checkoff referendum June 17.

Alabama farmers involved in peanut production in 2011, 2012 and 2013 are eligible to vote.

Polls will be open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 17. For polling locations, call the APPA at (334) 792-6482 or visit [alpeanuts.com](http://alpeanuts.com).

Checkoff funds must be used for research, education and promotion of peanuts.

## Calhoun County Cooking Contest



Calhoun County Women's Leadership Committee members baked their best pound cakes for the group's annual Heritage Cooking Contest May 8. From left are Doris Prickett, Faye Hammonds, Delle Bean, first-place winner Linda Loveless, third-place winner Linda Findley and second-place winner Phyllis Johnson. Loveless will compete in the state contest in Montgomery in September.

## Commodity Corner

### Bee & Honey

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently reported fewer winter honeybee losses. Total mortality this winter was 23.2 percent, down from 30.5 percent the previous year. While an improvement, the losses remain above sustainable levels.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

### Equine

The U.S. House of Representatives Ag Appropriations Committee recently finalized recommendations for FY2015. Unfortunately, the rider to suspend funding for horse slaughter inspectors was put back in place. U.S. Reps. Robert Aderholt and Martha Roby, both Alabama Republicans on the committee, voted against the rider, which is in line with Federation policy that supports processing horses for meat.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

### Dairy

A record 135 students attended the DAIRY U program May 3, hosted by Auburn University's Animal Science Department and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Students learned about dairy production and milk products. The Alabama Farmers Federation's State Dairy Committee has supported the program since it began six years ago.

-Guy Hall, division director

### Cotton; Soybean; Wheat & Feed Grains

The State Cotton, Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grains committees funded a \$100,000 irrigation project for the Prattville Agricultural Research Unit. The irrigation system is now installed and should soon be ready for use.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

### Forestry, Catfish

Infestations of the loblolly pine sawfly have been reported in Colbert, Marion, Franklin, Lamar and Fayette counties. These native insects can devastate pine stands. Report infestations to the Alabama Forestry Commission online at [Forestry.Alabama.gov](http://Forestry.Alabama.gov).

Final interviews were conducted June 10-12 to replace Dr. David Rouse, who retired as the head of Auburn University's School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences last year.

-Rick Oates, divisions director

### Peanuts

The 16th annual Southern Peanut Growers Conference is July 24-26 at the Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City Beach, Florida. For registration and more information, call the Alabama Peanut Producers Association at (334) 792-6482.

-Jim Cravey, interim division director

## Applications Due July 1 For Young Farmers Contests

**A**labama young farmers have until July 1 to submit applications for the Excellence in Agriculture and Discussion Meet contests. Both events are held during the Alabama Farmers Federation's Commodity Producers Conference in August in Huntsville.

Young farmers, including couples, who are involved in agriculture but do not earn more than half their income from production agriculture are eligible for Excellence in Ag. Each competitor must submit an application and give a 15-minute presentation. Past applicants have included agriscience teachers, Extension agents, veterinarians and ag lenders.

The 2014 Excellence in Agriculture winner will receive a zero-turn John Deere mower from Dow Agro-Sciences and a computer package from Valcom/CSS Wireless.

In the Discussion Meet, contestants will simulate a committee meeting and discuss pre-selected topics. Four finalists will be selected to compete at the Federation's Annual Meeting in December.

The 2014 Discussion Meet winner will receive a 4-wheeler from First South Farm Credit.

The Alabama Farmers Federation will provide both winners with an all-expense paid trip to San Diego, California, where they will participate in the national competitions.

Applications are available online at [AlfaYoungFarmers.org](http://AlfaYoungFarmers.org). For more information, contact Federation Young Farmers Director Jennifer Himburg at [jhimburg@alfafarmers.org](mailto:jhimburg@alfafarmers.org) or (334) 612-5159.

## OBITUARY

**Jo John Williams Jr.**, a member of the Jackson County Farmers Federation, died May 28. He was 88.

A World War II veteran, he is survived by his son, James Williams (Jeanne), and three grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Stevenson Cumberland Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 566, Stevenson, AL 35772.

## USDA Tracks Progress On Implementing Farm Bill

**U**SDA officials say they have made progress on all areas of the 2014 farm bill, but considerable uncertainty remains as many new programs have not been finalized.

"Farmers are still anxious to learn more details about new farm programs in the commodity title portion of the bill," said Alabama Farmers Federation National Legislative Programs Director Mitt Walker. "Farmers will need to make decisions about reallocating base acres and choosing between two new commodity title programs based on price or revenue protection."

Major initiatives implemented in the farm bill are disaster relief programs for livestock producers. Farmers could apply for the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program starting April 15.

The USDA reported receiving approx-

imately 33,000 applications from farmers and disbursing \$16.3 million in disaster relief assistance from the 2014 farm bill as of May 1. Farmers have until Jan. 30, 2015, to apply for losses incurred from Oct. 1, 2011 to Dec. 31, 2014.

Later this year, row crop farmers can enroll in risk management programs created through the farm bill.

"It's important for farmers to start thinking about how new provisions will impact their operations," Walker said. "The Federation is partnering with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to conduct educational meetings once the rules of the farm bill have been finalized."

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) has prepared a set of videos to help farmers, landowners and others better understand provisions of the farm bill. Go to [FB.org](http://FB.org) and click "issues" to see the videos.

## A.L.F.A. Leaders In South Alabama



Members of the Agricultural Leaders For Alabama (A.L.F.A.) group toured farms in south Alabama May 20-22 as part of their final class. Houston County farmer Colby Willoughby, foreground, talked with A.L.F.A. Leaders Grant Buck, Allie Corcoran, Jay Stewart and Jeremy Brown about his family's cucumber farm.

## Upcoming Federation Events

- **June 30 - July 2:** Youth Leadership Conference in Columbiana
- **July 10-13:** County Presidents Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee
- **July 11:** Registration deadline for the Commodity Producers Conference in Huntsville

## Soybean Shirts At FFA Convention



The Alabama Farmers Federation State Soybean Committee promoted its industry by handing out T-shirts to more than 1,900 students, teachers and parents who attended the Alabama FFA Convention in Montgomery June 3-6. The back of the shirt showed items made from soybeans including gasoline, crayons and plastics.



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## Two Arrested In DeKalb County For Cattle Theft

The Alabama Agriculture and Rural Crime Unit (ARCU) and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office arrested two men May 28, in connection with recent cattle thefts. Brothers David Grant Fulmer, 28, of Collingsville and Eddie Ray Fulmer, 31, of Albertville now face multiple theft charges.

In mid-May, more than 50 head of cattle and farm equipment were reported stolen from farms in the New Harmony and Lebanon communities.

"ARCU investigators are very familiar with these types of thefts and have contacts all over the South to track cattle and livestock movements," said DeKalb County Sheriff Jimmy Harris. "This is another case of working together with all available resources to solve crimes."

According to ARCU Commander Gene Wiggins, the unit has worked more than 100 cases, recovered more than \$1.5 million in stolen property and made 55 arrests since its inception in June 2013.

To report suspicious activity, contact the ARCU tipline at 1-855-75-CRIME.

## Poultry Workshop In Lowndes County



Lowndes County poultry farmers Ben and Keith Till hosted a workshop for Alfa Farm Services Representatives June 6, where employees discussed construction standards and grower challenges. Above, Federation intern Reed Phillips and Poultry Division Director Guy Hall talk to Ben Till about construction upgrades on his farm.