

Cultivator

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Compliance Forms Due June 1

Alabama farmers must certify compliance with certain conservation requirements by June 1 to remain eligible for crop insurance and other federal farm programs.

The form — AD-1026 — is required to comply with Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELCS) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions of the farm bill. Failure to submit the form would result in ineligibility for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans and disaster assistance payments; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FSA conservation program benefits; or federal crop insurance premium benefits.

“Since 1985, conservation compliance has been required for many farm bill programs, but a change is that compliance is now also tied to crop insurance,” said Alabama Farmers Federation National Legislative Programs Director Mitt Walker. “Many row crop farmers are familiar with submitting the AD-1026, but this may be new for producers of other crops such as fruits and vegetables. The farm bill has new and expanded insurance programs, but conservation compliance must be certified.”

Farmers planning to remove fence rows, convert woodlots to cropland, combine fields, split a field into two or more, or conduct drainage activities not previously evaluated by NRCS must also submit the AD-1026 form to FSA. NRCS will then provide HELCS or WC technical evaluations.

For more information, contact a local FSA office, or visit tinyurl.com/ConservationCompliance.



The 43rd annual Commodity Producers Conference, which features a day of farm tours, will be in Montgomery July 30-Aug. 1. Above, Alabama Farmers Federation members visit Wade Hill's Lawrence County farm during the 2014 Commodity Producers Conference in Huntsville.

Farmers To Tour Capital City In August

Registration is now open for the Alabama Farmers Federation 43rd Commodity Producers Conference in Montgomery July 30-Aug. 1.

The conference features farm tours and educational seminars, along with competitions for the Young Farmers and Women's Leadership divisions.

“The Commodity Producers Conference is a highlight of the year for many Federation members,” said Brian Hardin, Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department director for the Federation. “We're happy to host attendees in the Capital City and hope they enjoy seeing the farms and attractions of the River Region.”

The three-day event starts Thursday evening with a welcome banquet and registration for the annual Tablesapes, Quilting and Table Runners contests.

On Friday, participants may choose from six tour options, which highlight farms and agricultural sites in central Ala-

bama. That evening, attendees may watch Montgomery's minor league baseball team, the Biscuits, take on the Tennessee Smokies, followed by fireworks.

Saturday events include the Young Farmers Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture competitions, as well as seminars on topics from beef cattle breeding to wild hog management. Two general sessions that afternoon will include presentations on a new invasive species, the tawny crazy ant, and a talk on weather and climatology.

The movie “Farmland” will be screened before the closing banquet, where the Young Farmers will announce Outstanding Young Farm Family and Excellence in Ag winners as well as the Discussion Meet final four. Entertainment will be provided by Nashville songwriters in a production called “The Heart Behind the Music.”

Registration is due June 22. For more information, visit AlfaFarmers.org.

Commodity Corner

Hay & Forage

According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service, 66 percent of Alabama's pasture is rated good or excellent as of May 11. Dry, warm weather and favorable conditions have allowed farmers to finish first hay cuttings, but only with average quality. High-moisture haylage continues to gain popularity statewide. Growers are encouraged to have each cutting tested. Contact local Extension agents for more information.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Dairy

The National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) voted "no" on a proposal to lower the somatic cell count requirement for raw milk. The current standard is safe for consumption. Hopefully, the group's actions will allow farmers to receive market premiums from processors for improved milk quality.

-Guy Hall, division director

Forestry

Alabama landowners may determine wildfire assessment risks with a new web tool from the Alabama Forestry Commission. Landscape characteristics, historical fire occurrence, weather and terrain are used to identify fire threats. Find the tool online at SouthernWildfireRisk.com.

-Rick Oates, division director

Cotton, Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grains

April 2015 was wetter and warmer than normal, which caused planting delays and contributed to disease pressure. With a dry start to May, farmers have been working long hours to plant crops.

The Alabama Cotton Referendum was April 15. Cotton producers across the state voted on an amendment to extend the checkoff and provide a uniform 10-year assessment in an amount not to exceed \$1 per bale. The referendum passed 93-17.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Peanuts

A wet April delayed planting this year, but peanut farmers are catching up with approximately 35 percent of this year's crop now in the ground. So far, there has been good moisture for the 2015 planting season.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; Bee & Honey; Horticulture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is now issuing a weekly National Retail Report featuring prices advertised at farmers markets for fruits, vegetables, livestock, poultry and dairy products. For details, visit tinyurl.com/LocalFoodPrices.

-Mac Higginbotham, divisions director

New Station Director, Equipment For AAES

Guest column from AAES Outlying Units Director Dale Monks

The Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) is excited to announce Bill Clements as director at the Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center in Crossville. Clements, who previously worked as an experiment station director with North Carolina State University, started May 1.

AAES continuously strives to improve its ability to address farmers' needs through enhanced infrastructure and equipment.

To that end, it is upgrading tractors, irrigation systems, planters and harvest equipment with increased food production and economic efficiency in mind. By this time next year, AAES will have four center-pivot irrigation systems with variable-rate water application and chemigation in place and functioning.

Future field days will be planned to demonstrate the new equipment.

OBITUARIES

Mack Donaldson of the Curtis Community in Elba, a Coffee County Farmers Federation board member, died April 30. He was 79.

Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Mary Donaldson; daughters Lynn Ellis (Max) and Roxie Doster (Larry); five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Curtis Cemetery Fund, c/o Foster Bane, 1255 Co. Rd. 400, Elba, AL 36323.

Ralph Rogers Harris of Auburn died April 19. He was 86.

Harris taught animal science at Auburn University for more than 35 years before retiring in 1994. He is survived by daughter Mary Ellen Farrington; sons Roger Harris and Joel Harris (Ronda); and four grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Auburn University Foundation School of Agriculture, c/o Mark Wilton, Comer Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849 with Block and Bridle Club or Ag Ambassadors in the memo line.

Beef Tour Grazes Across Alabama



More than 40 Alabama Farmers Federation members and staff toured 19 farms in 14 Alabama counties during the annual Beef Tour, which covered 900 miles. Above, tour participants enjoy the view at Drury Catfish and Cattle Farm in Greensboro.

Upcoming Events

- **May 19-22** - Alabama Farmers Federation Washington Legislative Conference.
- **June 3-5** - Alabama Ag In The Classroom Summer Institute in Huntsville.
- **June 18-19** - Forestry and Wildlife School for Landowners in Munford. Contact Katherine at (205) 384-0606 for more information.
- **June 22** - Registration deadline for the Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Producers Conference July 30-Aug. 1 in Montgomery. Visit AlfaFarmers.org for details.
- **July 13-15** - Alabama Teachers Conservation Workshop in Auburn, hosted by the Alabama Forestry Association. For information, contact Ashley Smith at (334) 614-5048.
- **July 23-25** - 17th annual Southern Peanut Growers Conference at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia. Visit CallawayGardens.com/ASPGC2015 for registration.
- **July 31** - Registration deadline for Auburn University's Ag Solutions Day Aug. 10 in Orange Beach. Visit aces.edu/go/551 for information.

Agricultural Accolades

- Alabama Farmers Federation members **James L. Bassett** of Downs and **Carl Sanders** of Brundidge were elected to the Alabama Ag Credit board of directors April 16.
- **Joseph R. Tomasso Jr.** was named director for Auburn University's School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, effective Aug. 16.
- **Janaki Alavalapati** was named dean of Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, effective May 27.
- Tuskegee University professor **Channapatna Prakash** won the national 2015 Borlaug CAST (Council for Agricultural Science and Technology) Communication Award.
- **Auburn University's Soil Judging Team** won first place at a national competition in Monticello, Arkansas, April 18-24.

Poultry Committee Recognizes Owsley



The Alabama Farmers Federation State Poultry Committee met at the home office in Montgomery April 28. Members recognized Auburn University professor Frank Owsley, center, for his service to Alabama poultry farmers. From left are committee Chairman Joe Roberts of Fayette County, Owsley, and committee Vice Chairman Dennis Maze of Blount County.

Avian Influenza Found In Plains, Western U.S. Flocks

Poultry flocks in 15 states have tested positive for highly-pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) since December 2014.

The disease has not been found in Alabama, and poultry meat is safe for consumers. HPAI does not pose a threat to humans; however, agriculture officials encourage Alabama poultry farmers to follow good biosecurity practices to prevent a possible HPAI outbreak.

The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries has an HPAI state response plan, should it be needed.

HPAI has been reported in commercial turkey and chicken flocks in Arkansas, California, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. It has also been reported in backyard flocks in Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Lawrence County Beef Excellence Program



Lawrence County 4-H conducted a Youth Beef Excellence Program April 25 near Moulton. Front row, from left, are students LeAnn Pace, Carson Turner and Taylor Hood. Back row, from left, are judge Roland Coan; volunteer Clinton Hardin; students Dawson Daniel, Caden Daniel, Toby Jones and Josie Rae Jones; and judges Josh Melson of the Alabama Farmers Federation and Allen Pickens, Lawrence County Farmers Federation president.

Kids Day On The Farm



The Blount County Young Farmers hosted Kids Day On The Farm April 30 at the Blount County-Oneonta Agri-Business Center. More than 800 second-graders, teachers and parents attended for an up-close look at life on the farm. Youth rotated through different stations for information on cotton, bees, fish, vegetables, poultry and tractors.



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Byrne Appointed To House Rules Committee

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, a Republican from Fairhope, has been appointed to the House Rules Committee.

As a committee member, Byrne will have the opportunity to scrutinize every bill that comes before the House.

"Congressman Byrne's appointment to this committee after such a short time in Congress is a credit to his work ethic," said Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell. "We appreciate Representative Byrne's dedication to his constituents in south Alabama, including the farmers and rural residents he represents."

During his first committee meeting April 14, Byrne discussed a bill to repeal the federal estate tax, a measure supported by the Federation. Known as the "Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015," the bill passed the U.S. House 240-179, April 16.

Byrne represents Alabama's 1st Congressional District. In 2013, he won a special election to complete the term of Congressman Jo Bonner. Byrne was elected to his first full term in 2014.

Milking DAIRY U For All It's Worth



More than 140 youth and adults attended the seventh annual Dairy Awareness Introductory Resource For Youth (DAIRY U) program May 2 in Auburn. Students learned about cattle anatomy, milk content and cattle feed, while also making ice cream and watching a milking demonstration. For the first year, the program included a track for adults. Alabama Cooperative Extension System sponsored DAIRY U in partnership with Auburn University's Animal Sciences Department. The Alabama Farmers Federation State Dairy Committee also sponsored the event.