

Cultivator

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Programs May Ease Drought Losses

Farm Service Agency (FSA) disaster relief programs and a hay listing webpage from the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) aim to mitigate drought losses experienced by Alabama farmers.

The majority of Alabama counties have been declared primary natural disaster areas due to drought. Farmers who have experienced drought-related losses in these counties may qualify for assistance through the Emergency Loan Program (ELP), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or Live-stock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

ELP provides emergency loans to help farmers pay bills, while NAP is meant for non-insurable crops.

Hay fields and pastures in north and central Alabama have been decimated by the drought. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses during a county's normal grazing period.

Visit a local FSA office to learn more. Find office contact information at tinyurl.com/AlaFSAOffices.

To help cattle farmers locate hay, the ADAI created the Alabama Hay Listing webpage. Farmers with hay to sell may add an entry to the site, and farmers needing hay can search for listings.

The webpage was launched in cooperation with the Alabama Agri-business Council, Alabama Cattle-men's Association, Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Alabama Farmers Federation.

Find the hay listing webpage at agi.alabama.gov/s/haylistings.



Elmore County's Scott Poague feeds pellets to a cattle herd on his farm Nov. 7. Poague, who farms with his father, Terry, said the creek where his cattle usually drink has dried up, but they can move the cattle to a field with a pond that still has water.

Drought Spreads, Worsens Across State

Elmore County cattle farmer Scott Poague said August was the last time his farm received measurable rain.

"The creek on our property — the main water source for our cows — dried up well over a month ago," Poague said. "We do have another field with a pond that still has water. We started feeding hay about a month earlier than normal."

According to the Nov. 1 U.S. Drought Monitor, half the state, including Elmore County, is in extreme drought, and almost 15 percent is in exceptional drought.

Lack of feed has prompted some cattle farmers to reduce herd size. Mike Carnes of Marshall County. Carnes sold around 30 brood cows this summer when the drought started.

"We also marketed calves earlier this year," Carnes said. "They were a lighter weight than normal, and it's a down time in the market. That affects our income."

Carnes started feeding hay about two months earlier than usual. While he has hay left over from last year, he said he

anticipates needing about 150 more rolls. Poague and Carnes both said they usually plant winter grazing, but they didn't this year because of lack of soil moisture.

Local governments, including Birmingham, have responded to the drought by implementing water restrictions, which has impacted the state's greenhouse and nursery industries.

"Birmingham is the biggest marketplace in the state for the green industry. When the city puts in watering restrictions, it affects us," said Phillip Hunter of Shelby County's Hunter Trees. "November is usually a peak month for shipping trees, but jobs are getting postponed."

Hunter said it hasn't rained on his farm since the beginning of August, so he's relied on groundwater irrigation for three months to keep trees alive.

The dry conditions have led the Alabama Forestry Commission to expand a no-burn order to all 67 counties. Since Oct. 1, there have been 1,421 wildfires on 15,409 acres of land in the state.

Ag Matters Farm Tour Rides Again



U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne of Alabama's 1st Congressional District toured Baldwin County's Sirmon Farms on his second annual Ag Matters farm tour Oct. 13. Byrne, center, is pictured with Alabama Agriculture and Industries Commissioner John McMillan and farmer Joel Sirmon.

Commodity Corner

Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod

Nursery growers impacted by drought may qualify for the Farm Service Agency's Tree Assistance Program (TAP), which provides financial assistance to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters. TAP is a permanent disaster program and provides coverage of eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Soybean

The United Soybean Board is conducting a survey to assess double crop production practices. Survey results will guide research, education and communications efforts and help establish a baseline for future surveys when funds are available. Take the survey online at tinyurl.com/USB16Survey.

-Carla Hornady, division director

Poultry

On Nov. 4, Auburn University dedicated the new Charles C. Miller Jr. Poultry Research & Educational Building. The complex, which will include buildings for poultry diet and performance research, along with a new National Poultry Technology Center, should open by spring 2017. This will replace the existing poultry farm built over 40 years ago.

-Guy Hall, division director

Equine

The public comment period for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposed rule changes to the Horse Protection Act recently ended. The rule would eliminate devices used to change a horse's gait and require only USDA officials (not breed representatives) to be qualified inspectors. The State Equine Committee gave input to American Farm Bureau Federation's official comments, which emphasized more specific recommendations to limit unintended consequences while supporting efforts to prevent animal abuse.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Wildlife Resources

Be safe this hunting season — talk to your neighbors and fellow hunters, wear orange and use a safety harness. Report deer and turkey harvests through the mandatory Game Check program with the Outdoor Alabama smartphone app or online at OutdoorAlabama.com.

-William Green, division director

Peanuts

Research from the National Institutes of Health states a wearable patch that delivers small amounts of peanut protein through the skin may help treat children and young adults with peanut allergies.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

ARC, PLC Enrollment For 2017 Programs Open

Alabama farmers may enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) farm bill programs for the 2017 crop year through Aug. 1, 2017.

ARC and PLC were established by the 2014 farm bill and provide a safety net for farmers when prices or revenues drop substantially. Canola, corn, grain sorghum, oats, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat are among the covered commodities.

Last month, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) issued over \$7 billion in payments to assist farmers across the country who suffered losses in the 2015 crop year.

To enroll, visit a local FSA office. Go to tinyurl.com/AlaFSAOffices to find contact information.

Upcoming Events

- **Nov. 17-18** - Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association Annual Meeting in Clanton
 - AFVGA.org
- **Nov. 30** - Registration deadline for the American Farm Bureau Federation Conference in Phoenix Jan. 6-11 and the Canyon Country Bus Tour Jan. 11-15
 - tinyurl.com/AFBFTour2016
- **Dec. 4-6** - Alabama Farmers Federation annual meeting in Montgomery
 - cvent.com/d/5vq9hg
- **Dec. 6** - Registration deadline for the 2016 Alabama Corn and Wheat Short Course in Auburn Dec. 12-13
 - tinyurl.com/2016AlaCWSC
- **Jan. 11** - Registration deadline for Federation Commodity Organizational Meeting
 - cvent.com/d/vvqzj2

OBITUARY

Carlton "Cotton" Blackwood of Arley passed away Oct. 27. He was 74.

Blackwood was a member of the Winston County Farmers Federation.

He is survived by his daughter, Amy Colburn, and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Evelene.

Farmers To Vote On Wheat & Feed Grains Referendum Nov. 15

Producers who grew feed grains in 2015 or planted for harvest in 2016 are eligible to vote Nov. 15 on continuing the wheat and feed grains checkoff for five more years. The current rate is 1 cent per bushel on corn, wheat, grain sorghum and oats sold in Alabama.

Poll locations will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in every county. For poll locations, visit GrainsOfTruth.net.

Items Needed For Ag Foundation Silent Auction At Annual Meeting

The Alabama Farmers Federation is seeking two donations per county of new items valued at \$50 or more for the silent auction at the 95th annual meeting Dec. 6-7 in Montgomery. The auction benefits the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation.

Counties may send money for Federation staff to buy new items. Money is due by Nov. 25. For more information, contact Amanda Butts at (334) 612-5525.

Alabama Forestry Commission Names Cole Interim State Forester

Former Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) employee Gary Cole of Excel was recently appointed interim state forester.

Cole spent 38 years with AFC, where he served as southwest regional forester and Forest Management Division director before retiring in 2014. He is a 1985 Auburn University graduate.

Jimmerson TREASURE Forest Hosts Field Day



The Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) honored Gean and Jane Harris, its newest certified members, Oct. 27 during the North Region Field Day at Jimmerson TREASURE Forest in Fruithurst. Above, from left, are Jimmy and Sue Jimmerson, the Harrises, Lamar Dewberry of Clay County and ATFA Resource Coordinator William Green.

New Rules On Antibiotics In Feed Effective Jan. 1

The Food and Drug Administration's Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) will take effect Jan. 1, 2017.

The rule requires farmers have a prescription to deliver antibiotics to food animals through feed.

"It's important livestock farmers talk with their veterinarians and feed makers now to ensure everyone is prepared for the new requirements," said Alabama

Farmers Federation Beef and Meat Goat & Sheep divisions Director Nate Jaeger. "Farmers should make a list of current medications administered through feed and discuss their use with veterinarians and feed manufacturers and suppliers."

Jaeger said this will most likely impact cattle, sheep and goat farmers.

Go to bit.ly/AlabamaVFD for more information.

Events Raise Funds For Ag Foundation, American Cancer Society



Matthew and Jim Brady of Perry County were among about 120 outdoors enthusiasts who helped raise money for the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation during the inaugural Skeet Shoot Nov. 4 at Selwood Farm in Talladega County. Funds raised during the event will go toward scholarships, Ag in the Classroom and other educational and promotional efforts.



The Alabama Farmers Federation Board of Directors sported pink ties and attire during its Oct. 17 meeting at the home office in Montgomery to support the Alfa Cares Campaign. During October, Alfa customers and employees at the home office and over 350 service centers in three states raised \$112,938.92 for the American Cancer Society, which included a \$25,000 corporate pledge from the Alfa Foundation.

Youth Shine At Livestock Events



Dr. Brian Faris judges the 2016 Youth Goat Show beginner division Showmanship during the Alabama National Fair Nov. 5. During the 10-day fair, 228 youth exhibited 513 animals in beef, dairy, goat, sheep and swine shows sponsored by the Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Insurance.



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FarmPAC Endorsed Candidates Undefeated In 2016 Election

The 16 FarmPAC endorsed candidates in the 2016 election all won their respective races, including the next U.S. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

U.S. Senator Richard Shelby and Alabama's seven incumbent Congressmen also won re-election, along with Alabama Public Service Commission President Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh.

For the State Board of Education, Stephanie Bell won re-election in District 3. Jackie Zeigler of District 1 and incumbent Jeff Newman of District 7 were unopposed. Alabama Supreme Court Justices Michael Bolin, Kelli Wise and Tom Parker were also unopposed in their bids for re-election.

Six amendments supported by FarmPAC passed, including those dealing with state park funding, the right to work, police jurisdictions and ratifying local laws. Amendments opposed by FarmPAC related to local constitutional amendments and limited home rule also passed.

Wheat & Feed Grains At The Superspeedway



Before the biggest NASCAR race in the state, Alabama Farmers Federation State Wheat & Feed Grains Committee members manned the American Ethanol booth at Talladega Superspeedway Oct. 23 to discuss how ethanol helps NASCAR drivers start their engines. From left behind the table are Cherokee County farmer Nick McMichen; Calhoun County farmers Grady, Troy and Doug Trantham; and Federation Wheat and Feed Grains Division Director Carla Hornady.