

Cultivator

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USDA Continues Work On Farm Bill

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced details and deadlines for the Cotton Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) and the Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP). Both were established by the 2014 farm bill.

"CTAP is bridging the gap between programs from the previous farm bill and the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), which will not be available until 2015," said Alabama Farmers Federation Cotton Division Director Carla Hornady. "Because of federal changes with the new fiscal year, it's important farmers apply at their local Farm Service Agency offices even before the deadline."

Congressionally mandated reductions on CTAP payments will take effect Oct. 1 for producers who have not applied by Sept. 30.

These reductions will also affect the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Tree Assistance Program and the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program Frost Freeze payments.

The DMPP is voluntary and provides financial assistance to farmers when margins fall below the coverage level selected by the farmer. It replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract Program.

For additional details on the farm bill, visit AlabamaFarmBill.com.

Important Dates

- **Oct. 1** - New Federal Fiscal Year, sequestration rates take effect
- **Oct. 7** - CTAP applications due
- **Nov. 28** - DMPP applications due



Lee County farmer Mitch Lazenby expects to start harvesting cotton and peanuts the first week of October, with sesame harvest starting in November. He said the crops look promising, and he's hoping for good weather to finish the growing season.

Alabama Farmers Expect Good Harvest

Alabama farmers are optimistic about the 2014 harvest thanks to favorable growing conditions early in the season.

Lee County farmer Mitch Lazenby plans to start harvesting his 500 acres of cotton and 200 acres of peanuts around the first week of October.

"So far everything is on schedule, and we're expecting a good harvest," Lazenby said. "The price of cotton has dropped dramatically during the season. We're happy with the cotton we booked early."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Sept. 8 Crop Progress and Condition Report, more than 55 percent of the state's cotton crop is rated good or excellent.

However, the report rates more than 50 percent of Alabama's peanut crop as poor or fair. The USDA still expects a 19-percent increase in harvest over 2013 for the state, but farmers also planted 25,000 more acres of peanuts this year.

In Talladega County, farmer Jeremy Wilson is halfway through corn harvest and averaging more than 200 bushels per acre on irrigated and dryland corn.

"One of our farms near Lincoln went seven weeks without rain, so we had to irrigate a lot," Wilson said. "But we can't complain with the yields we're getting. For people who planted late and didn't irrigate, it looks pretty terrible."

Many farmers near Talladega and Calhoun counties reported crops suffering from lack of summer rain. Anniston reported its driest July on record with just more than a half-inch of rain.

Morgan County Young Farmers Chairman Jason Fields said hungry armyworms were the only problems he had this year.

"We had one field of millet they destroyed," Fields said. "We're working hard to get the rest of the hay up before the armyworms find it. We should still be in good shape for winter."

State Superintendent Tours Alabama Schools

Alabama State Superintendent Tommy Bice started a six-week statewide tour Aug. 26 to promote education and answer questions about public schools.

Each event starts at 6 p.m. with a talk from Bice followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session.

"These tours provide a great opportunity for Federation members to talk directly with Superintendent Bice about the importance of career tech and agricultural education in our public schools," said Alabama Farmers Federation Young Farmers Director Jennifer Himburg, who also serves on the Alabama Workforce Council.

Bice's talks will include information on his department's PLAN 2020 for improving public education, student testing, accountability and the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards.

The tour has already made four stops in Demopolis, Opelika, Birmingham and Montgomery. Remaining tour dates and locations are:

- **Sept. 16** - Florence High School
- **Sept. 18** - Dothan High School
- **Sept. 23** - Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy
- **Sept. 25** - Helena High School
- **Sept. 30** - Selma High School
- **Oct. 2** - Baker High School in Mobile
- **Oct. 7** - Jacksonville High School

Calendar of Events

- **Oct. 11** - *Old English Game Bantam Club of America District 11 Show* at the Calhoun County Agricenter in Anniston and *HORSE U for Youth* at the Stanley Wilson Beef Teaching Unit at Auburn University
- **Oct. 30** - Registration due for the *Alabama Farmers Federation annual meeting*. Go to events.signup4.com/2014AlfaAnnualMeeting for more information.

Commodity Corner

Dairy, Pork

Sept. 15 is the registration deadline for livestock shows at the Alabama National Fair Oct. 3-12 in Montgomery. Go to ALNationalFair.org/competitions/ livestock for registration.

-Guy Hall, divisions director

Cotton, Soybean, Wheat & Feed Grains

The Alabama Cotton Commission, Alabama Soybean Producers and Alabama Wheat & Feed Grain Producers recently sponsored lunches for various crop field day events across Alabama. The groups also sponsored Ag Discovery Day in Shorter Sept. 13.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Forestry, Wildlife

The Alabama Natural Resources Council field days are Oct. 2 in Colbert County, Oct. 9 in Perry County and Oct. 16 in Coffee County. Helene Mosley Award winners in each county will host. Visit Forestry.Alabama.gov for details.

-Rick Oates, divisions director

Peanuts

The National Peanut Board recently created the PeanutAllergyFacts.org website. Users can view information about comprehensive allergy management, answers to food allergy questions and ways to protect children without eliminating nutritious foods like peanuts.

-Jim Cravey, division director

Hay & Forage

The 2014 Southeast Hay Contest entry deadline is Sept. 22. Each sample must be witnessed by a county Extension agent and submitted simultaneously with \$17 payment to the contest. More than \$700 in prizes will be awarded. For more details, email njaeger@alfafarmers.org or visit AlabamaForages.com.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Bee & Honey

September is National Honey Month. Visit Honey.com to learn more about honey and ways to promote the sweet substance this month.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Congressional Staffers Tour Farms During August Recess

Staff members from Alabama Congressional offices toured farms across the state during the August recess to gain a better understanding of agriculture's importance to the state economy and current issues facing Alabama farmers.



Legislative Assistant Mike Albares, left, of U.S. Congresswoman Martha Roby's office, talks with Perry County farmer Paul Wheeler. Albares visited catfish farms across west Alabama Aug. 28.



Baldwin County farmer Bert Driskell, right, talks about this year's cotton crop with Legislative Correspondent Miriam Fry of U.S. Congressman Bradley Byrne's office in one of Driskell's fields. Fry toured farms in Baldwin and Mobile counties Sept. 4.



Jackson County Young Farmers Chairman Colin Wilson, left, and Alabama Cattlemen's Association employee Cobie Rutherford of Cullman County represented the state recently at the 2014 Young Cattlemen's Conference Tour. Sixty-two young cattlemen and women participated in this year's tour, which included stops in Denver, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Wilson, Rutherford Attend Leadership Program

Two Alabama cattlemen represented the state at the 2014 Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC) earlier this summer.

Jackson County Young Farmers Chairman Colin Wilson and Director of Industry Relations and Youth Activities for the Alabama Cattlemen's Association Cobie Rutherford of Cullman County traveled to Denver, Chicago and Washington, D.C., during the 10-day leadership development event.

"As a participant, I gained a new appreciation for the diversity of the beef industry," Wilson said. "While I was already

familiar with industry processes, it was still amazing to see the facilities and meet some of the most important people in this business."

The tour included stops at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Denver office; JBS Five Rivers' Kuner Feedyard; JBS Greeley facility; the Chicago Board of Trade; OSI Inc., beef patty manufacturers; and Congressional offices.

The YCC program started in 1980 and has provided more than 1,000 cattlemen and women with leadership training and beef industry education.

For more details, visit BeefUSA.org.

Submit Waters Of The U.S. Comments By Oct. 20

The deadline for submitting comments about the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule is Oct. 20.

According to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), more than 65 percent of comments received as of Aug. 27 supported the rule, the majority coming from mass campaigns by five environmental groups.

"This is a big issue for farmers in Alabama, but it's also an issue for home and business owners all across the U.S.," said Alabama Farmers Federation Director of National Legislative Programs Mitt Walker. "If this rule is adopted, Americans will be

dealing with EPA regulations in their own backyards."

Under the proposed WOTUS rule, the EPA could expand the definition of "navigable" waters to include streams, creeks and water branches. Even ditches that only hold water after a storm could be subject to regulation.

On Sept. 9, the U.S. House of Representatives was expected to vote on two measures addressing AFBF's concerns with WOTUS. At press time, the vote had not been taken.

To submit a comment to the EPA, visit capwiz.com/AlfaFarmers and click on "Take Action."

Goat & Sheep Checkoff Vote Set For Oct. 27

The Alabama Sheep and Goat Checkoff will conduct a referendum Oct. 21 to determine if the program should be continued for five more years at the current collection rate of 50 cents per head of sheep or goat sold in the state.

Any producer of goat and/or sheep in Alabama is eligible to cast a vote in person at Alabama Cooperative Extension System offices. Producers may vote from 8 a.m. until close of business.

For more information, contact Alabama Farmers Federation Meat Goat and Sheep Division Director Nate Jaeger at (334) 613-4221 or njaeger@alfafarmers.org.

OBITUARIES

James Thomas Powell, a member and former president of the Autauga County Farmers Federation, died Aug. 24. He was 84.

Powell served 12 years on the Alabama Farmers Federation state board and was secretary-treasurer for 3 years. His farm was the first honored as Alabama's Farm of Distinction in 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Madeira Durden Powell; sons Joseph (Karen) Powell and James Powell Jr.; a daughter, Susan (Carl) Poteat; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church, 100 E. 4th St., Prattville, AL 36067.

Chester (Check) Oliver Stephens Jr., a member and former president of the Autauga County Farmers Federation, died Aug. 18. He was 92.

A World War II veteran, Stephens was a pioneer of the catfish industry when he lived in Dallas County.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret Thompson Stephens; daughters Martha (Jimmy) Hughes and Gladys (Jimmy) Elliot; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, 301 Broad St., Selma, AL 36701 or Ivy Creek United Methodist Church, 560 Autauga County Rd. 1 S., Selma, AL 36703.

Small Farmers Of The Year Award



Elmore County farmers Patty and Joe Lambrecht were recently named the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2015 Small Farmers of the Year. They operate Oakview Farms near Wetumpka, where they make stone-ground grits and cornmeal. Their on-site farm store also features homegrown fruits and vegetables.



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New Areas Added For February Deer Hunting

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) recently announced additional south Alabama counties where February deer hunting will be allowed.

The new zone covers most areas south of U.S. Highway 80. This includes Baldwin, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Escambia, Geneva, Lowndes, Mobile, Monroe, Pike, Washington and Wilcox counties, along with portions of Barbour, Dallas, Hale, Henry, Houston, Lee, Macon, Marengo, Montgomery, Perry, Russell and Sumter counties.

Gun season for deer will be open Nov. 22-30 and Dec. 11-Feb. 10, 2015, in this zone. Closing the season Dec. 1-10 ensures a consistent number of days in the season for all Alabama zones.

Daily bag limits are one unantlered and one antlered deer.

Reporting deer and turkey harvests through ADCNR's Game Check program remains voluntary. For more information, visit OutdoorAlabama.com.

Blount County Young Farmers Host Safety Day



More than 220 people learned safety rules for using heavy farm equipment at the Blount County Young Farmers Farm Safety Day and Row Crop Tour at Miller Farms in Snead Aug. 16. First responders and volunteer firefighters from nine counties attended and earned continuing education credits. Participants also enjoyed a steak sandwich lunch. The biennial event was recognized by the American Farm Bureau Federation in 2012 as a County Activity of Excellence.