

# Cultivator

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## USDA Notices Sent On Yields, Acreage

Alabama farmers should soon receive written notification from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on current base acres, yields and a 2009-2012 planting history.

Farmers should cross-check the USDA letter with farm records. If correct, no further action is needed. If the letter is incomplete or incorrect, contact a local FSA office.

"Verifying the farm acreage history in the letter is extremely important because it is required to enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs," Alabama Farmers Federation Director of National Legislative Programs Mitt Walker said.

Later this summer, farmers will be able to update crop yield information and reallocate base acres.

By mid-winter, all producers on a farm will be required to make a one-time, unanimous and irrevocable election between price protection and county revenue protection or individual revenue protection for the 2014-2018 crop years. Producers can expect to sign contracts for ARC or PLC for the 2014 and 2015 crop years in the spring of 2015.

The one change affecting Alabama farmers is upland cotton no longer being covered under these programs. Instead, it will be included in the new Stacked Income Protection Program (STAX).

For the latest farm bill information concerning Alabama farmers, visit [AlabamaFarmBill.com](http://AlabamaFarmBill.com).

Visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov) or the local FSA office for general information on the 2014 farm bill programs.



The Little Nashville Tree Farm in Jackson County, above, was one of more than a dozen locations in north Alabama and southern Tennessee toured by Alabama Farmers Federation members during the 42nd Commodity Producers Conference Aug. 7-10 in Huntsville.

## Farmers Enjoy Annual Tours, Seminars

More than 800 Alabama Farmers Federation members attended the 42nd Commodity Producers Conference in Huntsville Aug. 7-10 for educational tours, seminars, Young Farmers (YF) Division contests and Women's Leadership Committee (WLC) competitions.

From a goat dairy and equine hospital to a peach orchard and tree farm, the tours in north Alabama and southern Tennessee highlighted the second day of the conference.

"I think all the stops have been excellent," said Dallas County Farmers Federation President and cattleman Jimmy Holliman, who toured beef, goat, horse and hay operations in Limestone, Morgan and Lawrence counties. "Every farm we went to is using new technology. I like to see new ideas from other farmers."

Farmers learned more about the implementation of the new farm bill and the bright future of the Alabama Coop-

erative Extension System during general sessions Aug. 9. Other seminars covered livestock management, rural crime and environmental stewardship.

State Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Committee member and former high school ag teacher Charles Tew of Elmore County said he enjoys the annual event.

"The best part of the conference is getting to see other farmers, seeing the promotion they're putting into their operations and knowing our work as farmers will be carried on," Tew said.

Winners in the annual WLC contests and the YF Excellence in Ag competition were announced Aug. 9, along with the four finalists for the YF Discussion Meet. Read the September issue of *Neighbors* magazine for details, or find the stories online at [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org).

The Agricultural Leaders For Alabama (A.L.F.A.) graduation Aug. 7 at the conference will be in the October *Neighbors*.

## Fall Armyworms Invade, Destroy Alabama Crops

Alabama farmers are feeling the pinch from an infestation of fall armyworms munching on crops and pastureland. By late July, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) had received reports of armyworms in 47 counties.

Lamar County farmer Will Gilmer said he lost 10 acres of sorghum, but it could have been worse.

"I have never seen that many at one time or that much of a variance in size," Gilmer said. "Two years ago we lost 15-20 acres of soybeans, but this year, we caught them early."



Fall armyworm

Kathy Flanders, ACES entomology and plant pathology professor, said farmers should treat fields when worms range from two to three per square foot. In hay fields, if farmers are

close to cutting and see damage, they should cut anyway. For information on controlling armyworms, contact a local Extension office.

"It's not the worst year, but it's shaping up to be moderately bad," Flanders said. "Armyworms reproduce up to six generations in a year, and each generation creeps farther north, reaching New York by fall; hence the name."

Flanders said infestation reports usually come in mid-July, but this year reports came the first week of July.

Sweep nets are available at county Extension offices and can help farmers detect worms.

"The key is to find them before they're too big," Flanders said. "They do 80 percent of their feeding in the last four days of their lives."

Former row cropper and Bermuda grass producer Frank Talbot of Pike County said the insects have wormed their way into the Wiregrass, too.

"We've had a pretty good outbreak of them down here," Talbot said. "We got an inch of rain one day in late July, and that helped a bit. They do not like rain; they like it hot and dry."

Visit [AlabamaForages.com](http://AlabamaForages.com) for updates on the infestation, including a map of reports by county, and email Flanders at [flandkl@auburn.edu](mailto:flandkl@auburn.edu) to report armyworm sightings.



Blount County young farmer Lance Miller, left, and Cullman County young farmer Lee Haynes, right, were recently selected for national recognitions. Miller was one of 13 farmers who completed the National Cotton Council's Policy Education Program in July. Haynes was one of 15 farmers named an agricultural "Champion of Change" by the White House.

## Alabama Young Farmers Nationally Recognized

Two Alabama young farmers recently completed national programs and were recognized for their contributions to agriculture.

Cullman County farmer Lee Haynes was one of 15 farmers selected by the White House as an agricultural "Champion of Change." The honor included a trip to Washington, D.C., July 29, where Haynes participated in a round-table discussion about farming in the 21st century.

"I think it's important for all farmers to make a greater effort to communicate their stories," Haynes said during the discussion. "Farmers use scientifically proven methods because we care about our consumers, we care about our land, and we care about our animals."

Haynes owns and operates Nature's Best Egg Co. and C&R Haynes Farm along-

side his parents. They raise, process and distribute eggs to retail and institutional customers.

Blount County row crop farmer Lance Miller was one of 13 U.S. cotton farmers who completed the 2014 National Cotton Council (NCC) Policy Education Program (PEP) in July.

"I was really honored to be asked to participate in PEP," Miller said. "Representation is key to any organization, and this learning experience will always be with me."

PEP participants were briefed on national cotton policy issues and received communications training at a July meeting in Greensboro, N.C. They also attended the NCC annual meeting in Washington, D.C., Feb. 7-9 and viewed its policy development process.

## Upcoming Crop Tours

- The Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems (ACES) Crops Field Day is Friday, **Aug. 22**. Registration is at 8 a.m. at the Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in Headland with lunch included. Continuing education credits are available.
- The ACES East Alabama Crops Tour is Thursday, **Aug. 28**. The tour starts at 8 a.m. at Auburn University's Old Rotation with three additional stops along the way. Lunch and drone demonstrations will take place at the E.V. Smith Conference Center.

## Commodity Corner

### Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; Horticulture

The third Ag Discovery Adventure is Sept. 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the E.V. Smith Research Center in Shorter. The event is free and includes activities for children and adults covering topics of horticulture, home gardening, and crop and animal production.

-Mac Higginbotham, divisions director

### Beef

Beef farmers are currently experiencing the highest prices ever due to lack of cattle supply, record-breaking exports, resilient consumer demand and lower feed costs. It's a profitable bottom line, especially for those who chose to retain calves and will sell at board sales this month. The Piedmont Feeder Cattle Marketing Group board sale is Aug. 21 at noon at the Federation headquarters in Montgomery. Visit [ALFeederCattle.com](http://ALFeederCattle.com) for more details.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

### Cotton

Cotton Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) enrollment began Aug. 11 and will run through Oct. 7. News releases and enrollment deadlines will be listed at [AlabamaFarmBill.com](http://AlabamaFarmBill.com) as they become available.

-Carla Hornady, division director

### Catfish, Forestry

To honor America's catfish farmers, Congress has designated August as National Catfish Month. Be sure to support Alabama's catfish industry by eating healthy, delicious U.S. farm-raised catfish this month.

Registration is open for the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association annual meeting Oct. 9-11 at Auburn University. Visit [ATFA.net](http://ATFA.net) or call (334) 613-4305 for more information.

-Rick Oates, divisions director

### Dairy; Pork; Poultry

A Russian ban on U.S. imports is unlikely to directly affect producers. Dairy imports have been suspended since 2010, and a 14-month pork suspension was only lifted in March. According to reports, Russia accounts for 7 percent of U.S. poultry exports now, opposed to 40 percent in the '90s. However, if large quantities of these commodities don't find a home, it could lower market prices.

-Guy Hall, divisions director

### Peanuts

Peanut farmers still need a wide-spread soaking rain to ensure good yields. Since cool, wet weather delayed planting this year, harvest is expected to begin by Sept. 10.

-Jim Cravey, division director

## Russia Places Ban On US, EU Food Imports

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a 12-month ban on importing certain agriculture products from the U.S., 28 European Union nations, Norway, Canada and Australia starting Aug. 7.

The ban includes meat, poultry, fish, fruit, vegetables and milk. The move is a response to sanctions those countries imposed on Russia.

According to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), 2013 U.S. exports to Russia totaled \$1.3 billion, which accounts for about 1 percent of total sales. Last year, poultry exported to Russia totaled \$303 million.

While U.S. poultry growers are concerned about the ban, strong domestic demand for chicken may offset any negative effects. According to recent research from the National Chicken Council, poultry consumption in the U.S. is currently up 17 percent over last year.

## Promising Crop Yields Result In Lower Prices

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Crop Production report issued Aug. 12 predicts record corn and soybean crops in 2014 thanks to favorable weather.

U.S. corn farmers are expected to produce 14 billion bushels, up 1 percent from the record set in 2013. The soybean crop is predicted at a record 3.82 billion bushels, a 16-percent increase from 2013.

Cotton production is forecasted to increase 36 percent over 2013, with a total of 17.5 million bales, which weigh 480 pounds. The wheat crop is expected to be down 5 percent from last year.

While yields are forecast to hit record highs, prices are bottoming out.

Corn prices recently hit \$3.60 a bushel, their lowest level in four years and dramatically lower than the \$8 a bushel price reached in 2012. Soybeans were traded below \$11 a bushel Aug. 12, also the lowest since 2010.

For cotton, expected high yields and depressed Chinese demand has prices at their lowest in more than five years, around 60 cents a pound.

## South Alabama Contest Boosts Membership



A recent membership contest in South Alabama District Manager Steve Allen's area generated 670 new Federation members. Camden Alfa Insurance CSR Deborah Fuller, right, won the grand prize of \$1,500. Jennifer Garner, left, also in Camden, was one of eight CSRs to win \$500.

## Peanut Profitability Award



Dallas County farmer Owen Yoder was named the 2014 Lower Southeast Region Peanut Profitability Award winner by Southeast Farm Press. He was recognized at the 16th annual Southern Peanut Growers Conference in Panama City, Florida, July 24-26. (Photo by Paul Hollis, Southeast Farm Press.)



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## ARCU Bust Recovers Nearly A Half Million Dollars In Stolen Equipment

**A**labama Law Enforcement Agency's Agricultural and Rural Crime Unit (ARCU) recently recovered 11 pieces of farm equipment worth nearly \$500,000. The equipment was reported stolen from Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee.

ARCU agents arrested Jody D. Morgan, 53, and Steven Ray Parker, 38, both of Albertville, for receiving stolen property first-degree.

"Our agents worked diligently alongside local law enforcement to break this case," ARCU Commander Gene Wiggins said. "A case like this will make criminals think twice before they bring stolen equipment across the state border and try to resell it. We want thieves to know Alabama is closed to that kind of business."

Over the past 12 months, ARCU agents have investigated more than 100 cases and recovered more than \$2 million in stolen property. To provide a tip or report rural crime, visit [arcu.alabama.gov](http://arcu.alabama.gov) or call 1-855-75-CRIME.



Agricultural and Rural Crime Unit (ARCU) agents Tim Mathews, left, and Jay Whitehead worked the recent stolen equipment case. Along with local law enforcement, ARCU recovered nearly \$500,000 worth of equipment, including tractors, skid steers, trailers, a backhoe and a wood chipper. In the past year, ARCU agents have investigated more than 100 cases and recovered more than \$2 million in stolen property.