

USDA Details Farm Support Package

Applications for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) are open through Dec. 6 at Farm Service Agency offices.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced details in July of the \$16 billion package aimed at supporting American agricultural producers while the Trump Administration works on free, fair and reciprocal trade deals.

In addition to the MFP, the Food Purchase and Distribution Program and Agricultural Trade Promotion Program will assist farmers.

Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell said the announcement is good news for producers.

"President Trump is delivering on his promise to help producers sustain retaliatory tariffs imposed on our farmers by China," Parnell said. "We encourage continued talks to reach a trade deal with China and appreciate the administration recognizing the urgent need our farmers are experiencing."

MFP payments will be made in up to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in November and early January, respectively. The first tranche will be comprised of the higher of either 50% of a producer's calculated payment or \$15 per acre, which may reduce potential payments to be made in tranches two or three.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin making first tranche payments in mid-to-late August.

Learn more and download the MFP application at farmers.gov.



Commodity Producers Conference tours allowed farmers to visit operations in northeast Alabama, including Circle R Hay Farm in Fyffe. While there, attendees Michael Dick of Clay County, Morgan Rodgers of Covington County, Fletcher Bozeman of Crenshaw County and Doug Wigginton of Morgan County checked out farmer Thomas Ridgeway's square-bale hay.

Farmers Convene In Chattanooga

Around 750 Alabama farmers gathered in Chattanooga Aug. 1-3 for farm tours and seminars – and to recognize outstanding producers and industry experts.

The goal of the 47th annual Commodity Producers Conference was to help farmers improve their operations back home, said the Alabama Farmers Federation's Brian Hardin.

"Our tours and speakers helped showcase the agricultural diversity of farms in northeast Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee," said Hardin, the Federation's Governmental & Agricultural Programs Department Director. "We hope we were able to expand farmers' horizons and, ultimately, affect their bottom line."

Seminars focused on a wide range of topics, including hemp, highway regulations, state branding projects, social media marketing, beef cattle and innovative uses of forest products.

Extension professionals were also awarded for work tangibly affecting farmers. Dr. Kim Mullenix received the Alfa Award For Production Agriculture

& Forestry Research, while Dr. Ayanava Majumdar earned the Alfa Award For Production Agriculture & Forestry Extension.

During the closing banquet, Young Farmers contest winners were named. Luke Smelley of Hale County won the Outstanding Young Farm Family contest, while Kim and Daniel Mullenix of Lee County scored the Excellence in Agriculture title. Four Discussion Meet finalists – Ellie Watson, Lee County; Adam Wilson, Calhoun County; Kyle Morris, Cullman County; and Brad Cox, Fayette County – will compete in the final round of competition in December.

Other conference events included a welcome from Tennessee Farm Bureau President Jeff Aiken; a \$5,000 donation to North Jackson High School for help after a near-tragic grain bin accident in Stevenson; a concert by the Geneva FFA String Band; and entertainment by The Heart Behind The Music, featuring Linda Davis and Lenny LeBlanc.

The 2020 Commodity Producers Conference will be in Mobile.



Peanut Growers Gather In Panama City

The Southern Peanut Growers Conference was July 18-20 in Panama City Beach, Florida. Over 500 attendees were updated on production, research, legislation, marketing and promotion. From left are Alabama Peanut Producers Association (APPA) President Carl Sanders, Coffee County; APPA Vice President Mark Kaiser, Baldwin County; U.S. Rep. Drew Ferguson, R-Georgia.; and Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell.

Get Ag-tive

- **Agricultural Leaders For Alabama** (A.L.F.A. Leaders) Class V applications are due Oct. 1. The two-year training program for Alabamians aged 25-45 assists with personal and professional development in ag policy, industry leadership and organizational involvement. Questions? Contact Jennifer Christenberry at jchristenberry@alfafarmers.org.
- **The new Gulf Shores Plant Diagnostic Lab** is accepting samples for testing. Diagnostics include plant pest identification services, management advice and education for all agricultural crops, landscapes, home grounds and public gardens. Nematodes will still be tested at the Auburn location. Questions? Contact Marla Faver at (251) 620-7139.

Meeting Will Encourage Women In Ag Sept. 5-7

Women in agriculture who want to gain a better understanding of what it takes to manage a farm operation are encouraged to attend the Annie's Project Conference in Fairhope Sept. 5-7.

Workshops and hands-on activities focus on finances, legal issues, marketing, human resources and production risks. Speakers cover topics such as business entity decisions, online marketing tools, record keeping and production management. Participants will visit a farm, agribusinesses and an Auburn University agricultural research facility.

Attendees will also socialize and network during the opening banquet and a reception Friday evening.

Registration is \$100. Reserve a spot at aces.edu/go/991.



Pork Farmers Connect At Cullman Meeting

The State Pork Committee met at the Cullman County Farmers Federation building July 25 to discuss the current state of the pork industry in Alabama – and future opportunities – with new Alabama Farmers Federation Pork Division Director Russ Durrance. From left are Durrance, 1st Vice Chair Luther Bishop of Colbert County, Chair Tim Donaldson of Cullman County, Johnny Williams of Cherokee County and Joe Bradley of Randolph County.

Events & Deadlines

- Aug. 13** - Registration closes for Alfa Youth Leadership Conference Sept. 30-Oct. 1 in Columbiana
 - AlfaFarmers.org
- Sept. 5** - Federation Heritage Cooking Contest in Montgomery
- Sept. 14** - Ag Roundup in Auburn from 2-5 p.m.
 - Ag.Auburn.edu
- Sept. 23** - Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation (AFAF) scholarship reception in Auburn
- Sept. 24** - Federation Policy Development Meeting and FarmPAC Meeting in Montgomery
- Oct. 4-14** - Alabama National Fair in Montgomery
 - ALNationalFair.org
- Oct. 8-9** - New County Presidents Orientation in Montgomery
- Oct. 22-24** - Alabama Landowners Conference in Prattville
 - TREASUREforest.org
- Nov. 8** - 4th annual AFAF Skeet Shoot in Alpine
- Nov. 21-22** - Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Conference in Clanton
 - AFVGA.org

COMMODITY CORNER

BEE & HONEY

The Bee and Honey Division recently contributed \$2,500 to Auburn University's Bee Lab. The donation will support research, including honeybee decline, environmental effects on pollinator populations and colony collapse disorder.

-Hunter McBrayer, division director

BEEF

Alabama Extension's new statewide educational program for beef cattle producers is the Beef Systems Short Course. Topics include forages, nutrition, herd health, reproduction, record keeping, environmental stewardship, economics and meat science. Two topics will be discussed per night in a paired lecture-based format led by local animal science and forage Extension agents. Questions? Contact your regional agent.

-Brady Ragland, division director

WILDLIFE

Alabama sportsmen can now hunt feral pigs and white-tailed deer (when in season) with the aid of bait on privately owned or leased lands if in possession of an annual bait privilege license. The new license, \$15 for resident individual hunters and \$51 for non-residents, is available anywhere hunting licenses are sold, including outdooralabama.com.

-William Green, division director

POULTRY

Wayne Farms and the University of Georgia have completed a research project studying an effective way to reduce moisture levels in poultry litter. By using circulation fans, they reduced litter moisture by 10% and created more even housing conditions. The birds had a higher-quality paw score and appeared to be more comfortable as they spread themselves throughout the entire house. Find the complete research study at uspoultry.org.

-Russ Durrance, division director

PEANUTS

In an effort to push peanut butter consumption across the U.S., the National Peanut Board partnered with Alexa (or any Amazon Echo device) to provide peanut butter recipes. Say "Alexa, open Peanut Butter Jar," and Alexa will provide a peanut recipe.

-Jacob Davis, executive director

COTTON, SOYBEAN,

WHEAT & FEED GRAIN

The annual Crops Field Day is Aug. 23 at the Wiregrass Research Center in Headland. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Field tours are from 8:30 a.m. to noon, followed by lunch. Call the research station at (334) 693-3800 to learn more.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Ag In Action

Sweet Grown Alabama, a statewide agricultural branding program, has launched. Sweet Grown Alabama's mission is to enhance marketing opportunities for farmers by connecting retailers and consumers to Alabama-grown foods and other ag products. Farmers and value-added product makers can join and brand Alabama-grown products with the logo. Member farms and products will be listed in an online directory. Learn more at SweetGrownAlabama.org.

A Hemp Advisory Committee has been appointed by Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell. Joe Lambrecht of Elmore County chairs the committee, which includes Joel Sirmon, Baldwin County; Jim Lewey, Geneva County; Jackie Loyd, Jackson County; and Jason Lazenby, Lee County.

The H-2A certification process could change with an updated U.S. Labor Department rule, which would possibly make it easier for producers to participate in the program and find the labor they need. Current regulations require employers to complete a rigorous labor certification process to demonstrate the positions couldn't be filled by U.S. workers.

Farmers Should Scout For Cotton Blue Disease

Cotton leafroll dwarf virus (CLRDV) – the causal agent of cotton blue disease – has been confirmed on research stations in Alabama. The aphid-transmitted disease has been monitored since 2017.

CLRDV symptoms include stunting/dwarfing; compacted terminal growth; upward-cupped leaves; red discoloration of petioles and stems; distorted growth with yellowing around leaf edges; and crinkled leaves.

Extension and university researchers are requesting sample submissions. A form with sampling directions, accessed at aces.edu, should accompany submissions.

The data will help researchers better understand the development and distribution of the disease.



Parnell Continues Annual Tour In Luverne

Crenshaw County farmers visited with Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell in Luverne July 24. In 2019, Parnell will meet with farmers in all 67 Alabama counties, discussing policy, production challenges and Alfa Insurance updates. From left are Crenshaw County Farmers Federation President Tony Beck, Alabama Peanut Producers Association Executive Director Jacob Davis and Parnell.



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County Leaders Congregate

Sixty-four county leaders networked, received Alfa Insurance updates and reviewed Alabama Farmers Federation projects during the County Presidents Conference in Gulf Shores July 11-14. From left are Federation Southeast Area Vice President and Houston County Farmers Federation President George Jeffcoat and Bullock County Farmers Federation President Mike Dunn.

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Revised CWD Response Plan Released

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) released a revised Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Strategic Surveillance and Response Plan. CWD is found in 26 states, the closest in southwest Tennessee and north Mississippi.

In Alabama, it's illegal to import live cervids or cervid parts. Meat from out-of-state cervids may be imported if completely deboned and cleaned.

Since 2002, ADCNR tested over 8,000 wild and captive white-tailed deer with no positive CWD test results. Priority is placed on samples from target and road-killed animals, with hunter-harvested deer and deer taken under depredation permits also used. ADCNR may use sharpshooting to collect samples, but only with landowner permission and full cooperation. Continued sampling will occur with goals set at the county level. Sampling goals are based on a relative risk assessment for each county. To learn more, contact William Green at (334) 612-5235 or visit outdooralabama.org.



Alfa Donates Truck To AU Equestrian Team

The Auburn University (AU) Equestrian Team received a 2019 Chevy Silverado from the Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Companies July 15 at the AU Equine Center. State Equine Committee members were present for the donation. From left are Federation and Alfa President Jimmy Parnell; Jenny Foster, Crenshaw County; Tina Hammonds, Lowndes County; Scott Noles, Randolph County; Gean Harris, Cleburne County; Federation Equine Division Director Brady Ragland; and AU Equestrian Coach Greg Williams.