

Cultivator

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FarmPAC Announces Endorsements

On Feb. 12, FarmPAC, the political action committee of the Alabama Farmers Federation, announced endorsements for the 2018 primary election.

The endorsements followed a full day of meetings, during which Republican and Democratic candidates for statewide office met with Federation county leaders. Each had 10 minutes to address more than 80 FarmPAC Advisory Trustees and answer questions on issues ranging from taxes and regulation to judicial philosophy and traditional values.

Candidates endorsed by FarmPAC include

- Governor: Kay Ivey (R)
- Lieutenant Governor: Will Ainsworth (R)
- Attorney General: Alice Martin (R)
- Commissioner of Agriculture & Industries: Rick Pate (R)
- Secretary of State: John Merrill (R)
- State Treasurer: John McMillan (R)
- State Auditor: Jim Zeigler (R)
- Alabama Supreme Court, Chief Justice: Lyn Stuart (R)
- Alabama Supreme Court, Place 1: Brad Mendheim (R)
- Alabama Supreme Court, Place 2: Tommy Bryan (R)
- Alabama Supreme Court, Place 3: Will Sellers (R)
- Alabama Supreme Court, Place 4: Jay Mitchell (R).

FarmPAC endorsed all incumbent congressional candidates.

For a full list of endorsements, visit AlaFarmers.org.

Look for a list of Alabama Legislature and Alabama State Board of Education endorsements in the June Neighbors magazine.



Over 600 farmers representing 16 commodities gathered in Montgomery Feb 6-8 for the Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Organizational Meeting. They heard industry updates, learned about cutting-edge technology, elected leaders to state commodity committees and honored outgoing committee members.

Meeting Spotlights 16 Commodities

Industry insights, cutting-edge research updates and committee member elections were all part of the Alabama Farmers Federation's Commodity Organizational Meeting in Montgomery Feb. 6-8.

Talladega County row crop farmer Jeremy Wilson said the meeting was a great chance to network and learn tips to improve on-farm production.

"I enjoy going to this meeting every year to listen to speakers talk about current issues we're dealing with on our farms," said Wilson, who is on the State Soybean Committee. "It's also important for us to be involved in our commodity committees to help keep our farms profitable for years to come."

The Federation's Brian Hardin said the meeting sets the course for a successful year for the organization's committees, some of which manage checkoff dollars and promote Alabama agriculture.

"Thanks to our great speakers, Alabama farmers are learning applicable information to increase yields and performance and the importance of diversification on their farms," said Hardin, the Federation's Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department director.

Researchers and industry leaders made presentations to the Federation's Bee & Honey; Beef; Catfish; Cotton; Dairy; Equine; Forestry; Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod; Hay & Forage; Horticulture; Meat Goat & Sheep; Pork; Poultry; Soybean; Wheat & Feed Grains; and Wildlife Resources divisions. The Alabama Peanut Producers Association annual meeting and trade show was in Dothan Feb. 8.

Commodity committee members were elected to three-year terms, and outgoing committee members were honored as well. View the list of new committee members on page 3.

Federal Plans, Rulings Will Benefit Rural America

The Alabama Farmers Federation applauds recent infrastructure initiatives, budget deals and environmental edict delays, which are laying the foundation for rural renewal.

Infrastructure

President Donald J. Trump released his infrastructure plan Feb. 12. The plan seeks \$200 billion in federal funds to spur \$1.5 billion in infrastructure investments at the state, local, tribal and private levels. Of that, \$50 billion would be devoted to a Rural Infrastructure Program.

"We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways and waterways all across our land," Trump said. "And we will do it with American heart and American hands and American grit."

Budget Deal

On Feb. 9, the U.S. Senate and House passed a budget deal including assistance for cotton and dairy farmers, following a brief government shutdown. Trump signed the bill into law.

"Passage of this legislation was incredibly important to cotton farmers who have been without an adequate safety net for several years," said Federation National Legislative Programs

Director Mitt Walker. "We're pleased with the cotton provisions in the bill and believe the dairy program changes are a step in the right direction. Addressing these programs now allows for a clearer path to completing the next farm bill."

Under the budget, seed cotton is eligible for Price Loss Coverage (PLC) at a reference price of 36.7 cents per pound. The 2018 crop is eligible for PLC.

Revisions to the Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers include calculating payments monthly as opposed to current bimonthly payments.

Environment

In a move to help farmers, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has delayed implementation of the vague 2015 Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule to Jan. 31, 2020.

The postponement gives the EPA up to two years to develop a new rule to provide greater clarity for farmers.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has also delayed a new requirement — the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) — to May 1. The requirement could impact poultry and livestock farmers.

Events & Deadlines

- **March-May** - Extension Health Management Workshops For Sheep & Goat Herds
 - aces.edu/urban/smallruminants
- **March 2-3** - Young Farmers Conference in Montgomery
- **March 16** - Alabama Jr. Beef Expo in Montgomery
 - jrbeefexpo.com
- **March 21-22** - Food Entrepreneur Conference in Auburn
 - Register by March 14 at tinyurl.com/FoodEntConf.
- **April 2** - Nominations end for Bama's Best Pork Ribs contest
 - fb.com/alabamafarmers
 - instagram.com/alfafarmers
- **April 4-6** - Women's Leadership Conference in Birmingham
 - Register at AlfaFarmers.org by March 2.
- **April 5** - Alabama Farm-City Luncheon in Birmingham
 - Purchase tickets by March 9 at AlfaFarmers.org.
- **April 15** - Alabama Ag in the Classroom Summer Institute registration deadline
 - AlabamaAITC.org

Auxin Herbicide Training Planned

Auxin herbicide training is slated across Alabama through March to help applicators comply with the mandatory rule passed in 2017.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is hosting the training, where commercial applicators

will receive pesticide recertification credit.

Certified crop advisers will also receive 10 points per training.

Registration is \$15 and includes a meal. Visit tinyurl.com/AuxinTraining to learn more.

Conservation Program Applications Due March 2

Agricultural producers wanting to enhance current conservation efforts are encouraged to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) by March 2 to be considered for the current funding period. Applications are accepted year-round.

Through CSP, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps private landowners build their businesses while implementing conservation practices.

NRCS plans to enroll up to 10 million

acres in CSP in 2018.

The recently updated program will help producers better evaluate conservation options and benefits.

Some benefits include

- Improved cattle gains per acre
- Increased crop yields
- Decreased inputs
- Wildlife population improvements
- Better resilience to weather extremes.

Contact a local USDA service center or visit the NRCS website to learn more.

OBITUARIES

John "Bubba" Trotman of Montgomery died Feb. 3. He was 90.

Trotman was a well-known cattleman who served as president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Alabama Cattlemen's Association and Alabama Farm-City Committee.

He was preceded in death by wife Ellen Rogers Trotman; sons Frank Randolph Trotman (Lorrie) and John McNeill Trotman Jr. (Teri); and grandson John McNeill Trotman III. He is survived by sons Charles Rogers Trotman (Whitney) and Robert Tyler "Woody" Trotman; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Tilton Louis Register of Fadette died Jan. 31. He was 86.

Register was a former Geneva County Farmers Federation president.

He was preceded in death by wife Flora. He is survived by son Mark; daughter Nena Speigner (Chris); and four grandchildren.

2018 Commodity Organizational Meeting

Farmers were elected or reelected to three-year terms on their respective state commodity committees during the Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Organizational Meeting Feb. 6-8 in Montgomery. Outgoing committee members who served the maximum nine years also were honored during the three-day meeting.

New & Reelected Committee Members

Bee & Honey

Justin Hill, Calhoun
Jacob Littleton, Chilton
Todd Mullins, Madison
Troy Smith, Randolph

Beef

Bill Lipscomb, Autauga
Tim Whitley, Blount
Jay Buckley, Lamar
Larry Bowen, Randolph

Catfish

Ashley Kyser, Hale
Danny Miller, Hale
Mike Owens, Hale
David Pearce Jr., Dallas
Sid Nelson, Sumter
Milton Taylor, Lawrence

Cotton

Tim Mullek, Baldwin
Richard Lindsey, Cherokee
Matt Haney, Limestone
Jimmy Brooks, Monroe

Dairy

Darrell Rankins, Chambers
Martin Hendrix, Cleburne
Michaela Sanders, Elmore

Equine

Gean Harris, Cleburne
Frank Chirico, Coffee
Angela Sewell, Etowah
Scott Noles, Randolph

Forestry

Jimmy Jimmerson, Cleburne
John Frank Farrow, Tallapoosa
Emory Mosley, Washington
Jake Harper, Wilcox

Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod

Bryan Word, Jefferson
Dennis Wiley, Lauderdale
Bob Moore, Macon
Brian Keller, Mobile

Hay & Forage

Johnny Lee, Henry
Joe Ching, Mobile
T.J. Mitchell, Elmore
Bryan G'Villo, Hale

Horticulture

Todd Cassebaum, Baldwin
Arlie Powell, Chilton

Meat Goat & Sheep

Charlie Loveless, Calhoun
J.C. Holt, Colbert
Melissa Palmer, Elmore
Andrew Williams, Marengo

Pork

Luther Bishop, Colbert
Tim Donaldson, Cullman
Brian Anderson, Lee
Wesley Gates, Pickens

Poultry

Jacob Whitfield, Barbour
Gannon Nunley, Franklin
Corey Hill, Marshall
Joe Murphy, Pike

Soybean

Ben Johnson, DeKalb
Jesse Hobbs, Limestone
Annie Dee, Pickens
John DeLoach, Shelby

Wheat & Feed Grains

Clay Hastings, Jackson
James Walker, Lauderdale
Stewart McGill, Madison
Mike Dee, Pickens

Wildlife

Mike Parmer, Autauga
Meador Jones, Marengo
Wallace Belcher, Perry
Steve Wisdom, Shelby

Outgoing Members

Bee & Honey

Bill Mullins, Madison
Andy Webb, Washington

Catfish

Randy Hollingsworth, Hale
Will Pearce, Dallas

Cotton

Tom Ingram, Lee
Thomas Kirkland, Dale
Joe Mullek, Baldwin

Dairy

James Waite Sr., Covington

Hay & Forage

Wade Hill, Lawrence

Horticulture

Jeremy Calvert, Cullman

Poultry

Joe Roberts, Fayette
Tommy Thompson, Covington
Jan Woodham, Dale

Soybean

Robert Earl Acker, Cherokee

Wheat & Feed Grains

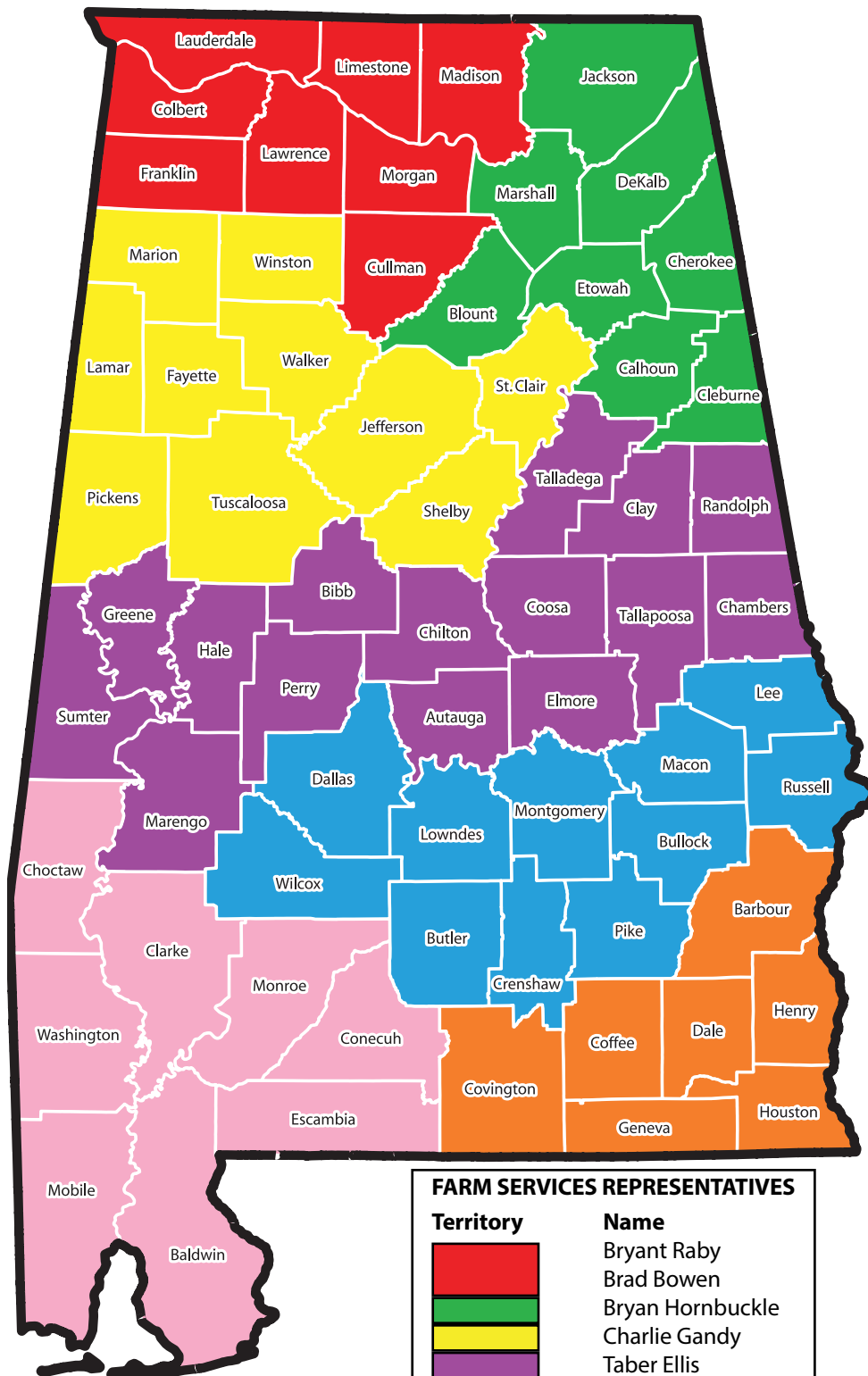
Paul Looney, Limestone








Wildlife

Grady Bobo, Tuscaloosa
Randy Gilmore, Jefferson

Alfa Insurance Farm Services Representatives

The Alfa Insurance Farm Services goal is simple — to perform comprehensive farm reviews to help farmers make strategic decisions to maximize protection and minimize risk. Since one in every three farms has an outbuilding or equipment that needs to be added to a policy, Farm Services Supervisor Shane Wootten recommends farmers set up a review with their Farm Services representative. Contact a local Alfa agent for more information.



FARM SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES	
Territory	Name
	Bryant Raby Brad Bowen
	Bryan Hornbuckle
	Charlie Gandy
	Taber Ellis
	Brett Runnels
	Hope Peters
	Tullie Culverhouse Lee Sikes
Supervisor	Shane Wootten

Young Farmers Committee Visits State House



Members of the Alabama Farmers Federation State Young Farmers Committee heard from House and Senate agriculture committee leaders Jan. 23 at the State House in Montgomery. From left are House Agriculture and Forestry Committee Chair David Sessions, R-Grand Bay; Cooper Holmes of Perry County; Taber Ellis of Autauga County; and Chase Hammock of Talladega County.

Commodity Corner

Horticulture

The Labor Department approved a record 32,084 H-2A visa program positions during the last quarter of 2017 — a 15 percent increase over the same quarter the year before and a 109 percent increase since 2013, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. The average minimum wage for H-2A workers is \$12.20 an hour this year, which is 13 percent higher than 2013.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Meat Goat & Sheep

Tuskegee University's Annual Goat Day is April 21 from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme is "Ideal Composite Meat Goat Breeds for the Southeastern U.S. and Related Techniques." The event includes research presentations, roundtable discussions and field demonstrations. Registration is \$15 before April 1. Visit tuskegee.edu/goatday to learn more.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grains

During the Commodity Organizational Meeting, Alabama's Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grain Producers set priorities for research in 2018. The top five issues are resistant weeds, soil health, insect pests, drought tolerance and precision agriculture.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

Dairy

The Dairy Alliance (formerly SUDIA) will hold a Global Dairy Summit March 12-13 in Atlanta. Agricultural leadership will gather from nine Southeastern states to discuss collaborations to add value to Southeastern milk. Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, who is the U.S. Dairy Export Council CEO, will share his vision of increasing dairy exports by 5 percent over the next five years.

-Guy Hall, division director

Wildlife

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service recently announced a new habitat restoration program for bobwhite quail for landowners in eligible areas. Applications are due March 2. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program's Working Lands for Wildlife, funding will be available for several central Alabama counties. Visit Alabama's NRCS website to learn more.

-William Green, division director

Peanuts

In light of a fierce cold and flu season, dietitians suggest consumers eat more peanuts and peanut butter to increase immunity. Legumes are one of the top immune-boosting foods, a key to staying healthy this winter.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

Choctaw County's Allen Interns With Federation

College senior Gentry Allen will intern with the Alabama Farmers Federation's Forestry and Wildlife divisions through April 20.

Allen will work on natural resources issues and update databases for the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA), an affiliate group of the Federation.



Gentry Allen

"Growing up in Choctaw County gave me a great interest in forestry and wildlife," Allen said. "I am hoping to learn all the ways ATFA and both divisions contribute to maintaining and growing our state's forestland."

Allen is a 2014 graduate of Patrician Academy in Choctaw County. He will graduate in May with a degree in business administration from Huntingdon College in Montgomery. He played safety for Huntingdon's football team from 2014 to 2017.

He is the son of Steve and Beth Allen of Butler. Steve is an Alfa Insurance district manager, and Beth is a nurse practitioner director for the State of Alabama.

On The Move In Ag

- **Jane Russell** of Montgomery County was named chair of the Alabama Forestry Commission Jan. 11. Russell is a past chair of the Alabama Farmers Federation State Forestry Committee. Madison County's **Katrenia Kier** was elected vice chair.
- **Tom Corcoran** of Barbour County was appointed to a three-year term on the National Peanut Board (NPB) Jan. 12. **Thomas Adams** of Henry County was appointed an NPB alternate.
- **Desmond Layne** has been named head of Auburn University's Department of Horticulture. A native Canadian and current professor at Washington State University, Layne's first day will be July 1.

Women's Committee Convenes



The State Women's Leadership Committee met Jan. 31 in Montgomery to discuss its upcoming conference and other events. From left are Secretary Kathy Gordon of Montgomery County; Chair Debbie Roberts of Fayette County; and Vice Chair Jo Ann Laney of Russell County.



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Montgomery, AL 36191-0001

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Montgomery, AL

THE CULTIVATOR is published monthly by the Alabama Farmers Federation, a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Correspondence may be addressed to **THE CULTIVATOR**, Marlee Moore - Editor, P.O. Box 11000, Montgomery, AL 36191-0001.

Six Farm Of Distinction Finalists Announced

Six finalists vying for the title of Alabama's 2018 Farm of Distinction (FOD) have been announced. The winner will be revealed at the Alabama Farm-City Awards in Birmingham April 5.

Alabama's six finalists are

- Thomas Adams, Henry County
- John DeLoach, Shelby County
- Greg Hamner, Lauderdale County
- Trey Montgomery, Greene County
- Sid Nelson, Sumter County
- Tyler Sanders, Houston County.

Each receives a \$250 gift certificate from the Alabama Farmers Cooperative (AFC) and an engraved plaque.

The FOD prize package includes

- John Deere Gator courtesy of AgPro, TriGreen and SunSouth
- \$1,000 AFC gift certificate
- Pole barn from Register Barns
- Engraved farm sign from Alfa Insurance.

Alabama's winner also receives \$2,500 as the state's representative at the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest.

Auburn Honors State's Ag Industry Influencers



The Auburn University (AU) Agricultural Alumni Association (AAA) inducted three industry leaders to the Alabama Agriculture Hall of Honor during a banquet Feb. 8. From left are AU College of Agriculture Dean Paul Patterson; Horace Horn of Greenville, agribusiness honoree; Glynn Debter of Horton, production honoree; Ron Shumack of Lenox, education/government honoree; and AAA President Bob Helms. Pioneer Awards were also presented to families of the late Thomas Eden Jr. of Auburn and William Jesse Forrester of Dothan.