

Cultivator

www.AlfaFarmers.org • News from the Alabama Farmers Federation

Farmers Appointed To FSA Committee

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has selected five Alabama farmers to serve as Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee members.

Monica Carroll of Ozark will serve as committee chair. Other committee members are Andy Lavender of Brundidge, Rodney Moon of Harvest, Steve Penry of Daphne and Doug Trantham of Alexandria. All are Alabama Farmers Federation members.

State committee members are selected by the secretary, serve at the pleasure of the secretary and are responsible for carrying out FSA's farm programs.

Committee members were appointed for one-year terms, which began Jan. 1.

"It's an honor to have been chosen to chair our state committee," said Carroll, who has a diversified farm raising cattle, timber, row crops and poultry with husband Chris. "It's also a responsibility I take very seriously. I know I speak for the entire committee when I say our goal is to help implement programs fairly and improve service to farmers and landowners in Alabama."

Federation President Jimmy Parnell praised the appointments.

"Understanding and implementing USDA farm programs can be challenging," Parnell said. "Secretary Perdue did an excellent job appointing qualified, experienced farmers to our state FSA committee."

Parnell said the appointments are critical as Congress begins work on the next farm bill.



Nineteen delegates from Alabama voted on policy changes and elected leaders at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in Nashville Jan. 9. From left are Alabama Farmers Federation Southwest Area Vice President Jake Harper, Wilcox County; North Area Vice President Rex Vaughn, Madison County; and District 8 Director Meador Jones, Marengo County.

President Trump Talks To Farmers

President Donald J. Trump unveiled his plan to rebuild rural America when addressing over 4,000 farmers at the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Convention in Nashville Jan. 9.

More than 100 Alabama farmers heard the president speak about the inheritance tax, repealing the Waters of the U.S. rule, rural infrastructure and the farm bill.



President Trump

"We know that farmers are our future," Trump said. "We are putting an end to the regulatory assault on your way of life."

Trump signed two executive orders at the event to expand rural broadband access. The orders call for broader, faster and better internet access in rural areas.

At the convention Jan. 5-10, the

Alabama Farmers Federation's 19 delegates considered policy changes and elected leaders. A \$1 AFBF dues increase passed.

Federation President Jimmy Parnell was re-elected to the AFBF board of directors. Georgia's Zippy Duvall was re-elected president, and South Dakota's Scott VanderWal was re-elected vice president.

The Federation won the AFBF's New Horizon Award among large-member states for the Alfa Cares program. It also brought home Awards of Excellence in all four program areas and received an Apex Award for contributions to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

Other events included Women's Leadership caucuses, Young Farmers contests, the IDEAg Trade Show and an address from singer Reba McEntire.

For a full recap, visit AlfaFarmers.org or read the February Neighbors magazine.

Rural Caucus Ready To Ramp Up Legislative Efforts



After the 2018 Alabama legislative session began in Montgomery, the Alabama House of Representatives Rural Caucus discussed goals during a dinner Jan. 10. Sponsors were the Alabama Farmers Federation, Alabama Cattlemen's Association (ACA), Alabama Poultry & Egg Association, Alabama Agribusiness Council and Alabama Rural Electric Association. From left are the Federation's David Cole; State Sen. Clay Scofield, R-Guntersville; Chairman of the Caucus State Rep. David Standridge, R-Hayden; and ACA's Erin Beasley.

Attorney General Joins Suits To Protect Farmers

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall joined lawsuits in December against California and Massachusetts for seeking to impose regulations on farmers in other states.

The state's poultry and livestock farmers applaud the move, said Alabama Farmers Federation representatives.

Alabama joined 12 other states Dec. 5 in filing a lawsuit against the State of California for requiring eggs sold there comply with its regulations governing the housing of laying hens. Six days later, Marshall joined a lawsuit with 12 states against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for barring the sale of eggs, pork and veal not housed according to its new regulations.

Marshall said the regulations could drive up production costs, affecting farmers and consumers. He also said such

actions establish bad precedent, which could affect other interstate commerce.

Marshall noted California's and Massachusetts' regulations violate the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, which gives Congress authority to regulate commerce among the states.

Cullman County egg producer Lee Haynes said complying with the out-of-state regulations would create a financial burden for farmers.

"These regulations are very costly for farmers because they force you to change your poultry housing systems. Production and long-term housing costs also are a lot higher," said Haynes. "Ultimately, consumers would pay more, which would bring down demand, making the overall impact even greater."

Visit tinyurl.com/MarshallSuits to read more about the lawsuits.

Women's Conference Is April 4-5 In Birmingham

The Alabama Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Conference is slated for April 4-5 in Birmingham. Register by March 2 at AlfaFarmers.org.

The annual conference combines ag advocacy and Southern storytelling through workshops and a keynote address from humorist Lisa Smartt.

The conference merges with the Alabama Farm-City Awards Luncheon April 5, where student contest and county committee winners will be recognized. Alabama's 2018 Farm of Distinction will also be announced.

Cruizin Keys Dueling Pianos will entertain attendees Thursday evening.

Events & Deadlines

- **January-February** - Ag Outlook meetings
 - tinyurl.com/AgOutlook18
- **Jan. 18** - Precision Ag Workshop in Birmingham
 - Register at bit.ly/2yyR1jv
- **Jan. 22** - Online registration closes for Commodity Organizational Meeting in Montgomery Feb. 6-8
 - tinyurl.com/CommOrg18
- **Feb. 3** - Alabama Beekeeping Symposium in Clanton
 - aces.edu/go/888
- **Feb. 8** - Alabama Peanut Producers Association Meeting & Trade Show in Dothan
- **March 2-3** - Young Farmers Conference in Montgomery
 - Registration closes Jan. 22 at tinyurl.com/YoungFarmers18
- **March 16** - Alabama Jr. Beef Expo in Montgomery
 - jrbeefexpo.com

Scholarship Apps Due Jan. 31

Scholarship applications through the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation (AFAF) and Alfa Foundation are due Jan. 31 at AlfaFarmers.org.

Students pursuing degrees in agriculture or forestry at Auburn University or Alabama A&M University may apply for AFAF scholarships. Up to

67 \$1,750 scholarships will be awarded to Alabama Farmers Federation members or their children.

The Alfa Foundation will award 100 \$1,000 scholarships to students attending Alabama colleges, universities and technical schools. Students must be Federation members.

OBITUARY

Bill Kilpatrick of Haleyville died Dec. 18. He was 89.

Kilpatrick was a former Marion County Farmers Federation president.

He was preceded in death by wife Nelda Truby Kilpatrick. He is survived by sons William Alan Kilpatrick and Joseph Scott Kilpatrick (Joyce), and grandson Caleb William Kilpatrick.

Commodity Corner

Livestock Outlook Positive For 2018

The 2018 outlook for livestock and poultry sectors is positive overall, said James Robb, a Livestock Marketing Information Center economist.

Demand for meat has increased, and Americans are expected to consume about 219 pounds of red meat and poultry per year. As demand increases, quality will be more important than ever.

In addition, exports have added value for cattle producers, up to an extra \$66 per head.

Robb noted the pork sector has proposed grading guidelines similar to beef. Pet food is changing the marketplace, too, by using animal-based proteins.

Read more at AlfaFarmers.org.

Register By Jan. 22 For Commodity Meeting

Online registration for the Commodity Organizational Meeting Feb. 6-8 closes Jan. 22 at AlfaFarmers.org.

Registration is \$60 per day and includes lunch. On-site registration is \$70 and does not include lunch.

Meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. each day in Montgomery.

Horticulture

The Produce Safety Rule, part of the Food Safety Modernization Act, goes into effect Jan. 26 for farms making \$500,000 or more in annual revenue. Small farms with \$250,000-\$500,000 in revenue come under compliance in January 2019. Farms with \$25,000-\$250,000 in sales will be regulated in January 2020. Learn more at tinyurl.com/ProduceTraining.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Wildlife

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will field test sodium nitrite, a feral swine toxic bait, in Alabama and Texas this year. Tests in central Alabama are expected to start midsummer. Visit aphis.usda.gov to learn more.

-William Green, division director

Poultry

Farmers who rely on heating fuel to protect and grow poultry and livestock should remember the propane shortage from several years ago. Since then, propane dealers increased storage of propane and kept up-to-date on deliveries. As low temperatures hit the South, the Alabama Farmers Federation is monitoring the availability of heating fuel this winter.

-Guy Hall, division director

Hay & Forage

The state saw an abundance of hay produced in 2017, but little is reported as high quality. Dr. Don Ball reminds farmers buying or selling hay for winter feeding that, "Poor quality brings double woe: intake declines because digestion is slow." Translation: Livestock get less nutrition per bale and eat less when consuming poor quality hay. Know the nutritive value of hay by sending samples to the Auburn Forage Lab. Visit aces.edu/anr/soillab to learn more.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Cotton

Outdoor gear and apparel retailer L.L. Bean has joined more than 470 members of Cotton LEADS™, a partnership between cotton industries in the U.S. and Australia. The group raises awareness of cotton producers' responsible growing practices and commitment to improvement. Learn more at cottonleads.org.

-Carla Hornady, division director

Peanuts

An international group of agricultural scientists has mapped the genetic code of peanuts. Peanut Genome Initiative findings will improve sustainability and profitability of the peanut industry. Learn more at PeanutFoundation.org.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

County Farmers Federations Spread Christmas Cheer In Local Communities



The Marion County Young Farmers (MCYF) donated \$1,622.93 to Christmas for Kids, which buys gifts for needy children. Proceeds were raised through the MCYF Dove Shoot last fall. The Marion County Farmers Federation also donated \$1,200 to Christmas for Kids. From left are Jason McRae, Scott Humphries, Phillip Wesson, MCYF Chairman James Allen Weeks and Christmas for Kids' Cole Sandlin.



The Dale County Women's Leadership Committee delivered presents to the Oakview Manor Health Care Center in Ozark during the Christmas season. The donations helped bring holiday cheer for the residents' annual Christmas party. From left are Debbie Baker and granddaughter Lilly, Sharon Byrd, Oakview Manor Activities Director Lorie Blackwell and Monica Carroll.

Committee Meetings Kick Off



The State Meat Goat & Sheep Committee met Jan. 3 in the Alabama Farmers Federation Montgomery home office to discuss checkoff reports and budgets. It also prepared for the Commodity Organizational Meeting Feb. 6-8. From left are Marengo County's Andrew Williams and Chilton County's Clay Mims.



P.O. Box 11000
Montgomery, AL 36191-0001

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #310
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.

Tax Reform Helps Farms, Families, Businesses

Alabama farmers, families and businesses will benefit from the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act President Donald J. Trump signed Dec. 22, said Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell.

"While no tax legislation is perfect, this plan encourages investment and job creation," Parnell said. "These changes will help America stay on a positive course."

Highlights:

- Lower tax rates
- Nearly doubles the standard deduction
- Expands the Child Tax Credit
- Preserves deductions for charitable contributions, mortgage interest and state and local taxes
- Farms and businesses can immediately write off the full cost of new equipment
- Estate tax exemption doubled
- Preserves deduction for customary business expenses, such as feed and seed

Visit tinyurl.com/TaxCutsJobs to learn more about the tax law.

Shelby County Farmers, Legislators Gather



Shelby County Farmers Federation (SCFF) board members enjoyed lunch with FarmPAC-endorsed legislators Dec. 19 in Columbiana. The SCFF and many county Federations have endorsed candidates in local races. Front row from left are State Rep. Arnold Mooney, Alabama Farmers Federation State Legislative Programs Director for the Senate Matthew Durdin, Federation District 6 Director Phillip Hunter and Robert Byrd. Back row from left are Federation Area Organization Director David Farnsworth, Alabama Supreme Court Associate Justice Will Sellers, State Reps. Matt Fridy and Corley Ellis, John DeLoach and SCFF President Jimmy Bice.