

## Jeff Coleman Scores FarmPAC Support

FarmPAC, a political action committee of the Alabama Farmers Federation, endorsed Jeff Coleman for U.S. House of Representatives in Alabama's 2nd Congressional District.

Federation Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department Assistant Director Mitt Walker said Coleman's conservative values, experience operating a business and status as a political outsider appealed to county leaders.

"Over the last few months, Jeff Coleman has met with farmers and Federation leaders across District 2," Walker said. "His success as a fifth-generation businessman and commitment to growing the economy while protecting individual liberty resonated with members. He understands the importance of agriculture and forestry to our state and nation. We are confident he will fight for farmers and rural families, as well as our military and veterans."

Coleman owns Coleman Worldwide Moving, ranked one of Alabama's 30 largest private companies. He and wife Tiffany live in Dothan and have three daughters.

"I am deeply humbled and grateful to have the endorsement of the Alabama Farmers Federation," Coleman said. "Agriculture is the state's No. 1 industry, and I will be a champion for the hardworking farmers of this state. I will work tirelessly to support the men and women of this state who wake up every morning to play their part in feeding and clothing the world."

District 2 includes Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston and Pike counties, as well as portions of Montgomery County.

## Cullman County Hosts Legislators



The Cullman County Farmers Federation (CCFF) and Women's Leadership Committee (WLC) hosted legislators during a meeting Jan. 3. Members received an update on state and county issues. From left are Rep. Corey Harbison, R-Hanceville; Rep. Scott Stadthagen, R-Hartselle; CCFF President Ben Haynes; Cullman County WLC Chair Lisa Lake; Rep. Randall Shedd, R-Arab; and Sen. Garlan Gudger Jr., R-Cullman.

## Trump Signs China Trade Agreement

For the second time in as many days, Alabama farmers received good news on trade Jan. 16 as the U.S. Senate approved the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) by a vote of 89-10. Passage of the deal, which replaces the North American Free Trade Agreement, comes on the heels of President Donald J. Trump signing the first phase of a China trade agreement Jan. 15.

"These trade deals are steps in the right direction and a welcome sign for farmers who have been dealing with low commodity prices," said Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell. "We appreciate the administration fighting for better trade deals for agriculture."

Trump's administration said China has pledged to increase its spending on all American goods by \$200 billion over the next two years compared to 2017 levels. At least \$40 billion of that total will be spent on U.S. farm goods. The China agreement takes effect in 30 days.

Federation Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department Assistant Director Mitt Walker echoed Parnell's optimism.

"Canada and Mexico now rank as our two largest export markets, accounting for more than \$40 billion in value," he said. "Exports support about 900,000 American jobs in the food, agriculture and related sectors of the economy."

The USMCA will provide new market access for dairy and poultry products and will result in fair grading standards for U.S. wheat exported to Canada. The deal also addresses agricultural biotechnology to support 21st century innovations, including new technologies such as gene editing.

The USMCA legislation passed the House of Representatives last month by a 385-41 vote. It now goes to President Trump for his signature.

Trump was slated to address farmers during the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention Jan. 19.

## No-Cost Hay Hauler Permits Available

As a result of drought conditions last fall, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is providing relief to livestock producers through no-cost hay hauler permits.

The permits are available through March 31. Haulers must be registered in ALDOT's database to receive the permit. Learn more at [dot.state.al.us](http://dot.state.al.us).

The Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries helped coordinate the effort with ALDOT.

## Events & Deadlines

**Feb. 3-4** - Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Organization Meeting in Montgomery

- Register by Jan. 21 at [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org)

**Feb. 4** - Legislative session begins

**Feb. 5** - Alabama Agriculture Hall of Honor Banquet in Opelika

- [ag.auburn.edu](http://ag.auburn.edu)

**Feb. 12** - Taste of Alabama Legislative Reception in Montgomery

**Feb. 14-15** - Alabama Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention and Trade Show in Montgomery

- [BamaBeef.org](http://BamaBeef.org)

**Feb. 20-22** - Catfish Farmers of America Convention in Las Vegas

**Feb. 25-29** - Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas

**Feb. 28-March 1** - Federation Young Farmers Conference in Mobile

- Register by Jan. 31 at [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org)

**March 3** - Presidential Primary Election

**March 8-13** - Alabama Ag Expedition for Auburn University students

- Contact Carla Hornady at [chornady@alfafarmers.org](mailto:chornady@alfafarmers.org)

**March 13-15** - Beef Cattle Conference in Auburn

**March 19-21** - Junior Beef Expo in Montgomery

- [JrBeefExpo.com](http://JrBeefExpo.com)

## COMMODITY CORNER

### AFVGA

Directors and members of the Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association traveled to Savannah for the annual Southeastern Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference in mid-January. They learned about the latest research on fruit and vegetable production, labor laws and business management.

-Hunter McBrayer, executive director

### PORK, POULTRY

A proposed rule was published in the Federal Register to allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to determine if a "packer, swine contractor or live poultry dealer has made or given any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any person or locality," violating the Packers and Stockyards Act. This would replace the Obama-era proposal dubbed the "GIPSA rule." The 60-day comment period ends March 13. Learn more at [FederalRegister.gov](http://FederalRegister.gov).

-Russ Durrance, divisions director

### PEANUTS

The Alabama Peanut Producers Association annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the Alabama-Florida Peanut Trade Show Feb. 6. The meeting begins at 11:15 a.m. in the Volunteer Building at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan.

-Jacob Davis, executive director

### FORESTRY

The University of Arkansas is now home to the largest mass timber building in the U.S. The newly unveiled residence hall and student center, Adohi Hall (Cherokee for "woods"), is a 202,027-square-foot mixed-use building made of cross-laminated timber.

-William Green, division director

### COTTON, SOYBEAN, WHEAT & FEED GRAIN

U.S. corn production for grain is forecast at 13.7 billion bushels, down 5% with an average yield of 167 bushels per acre. Soybean production is forecast at 3.55 billion bushels, down 20%, with the average yield of 46.9 bushels an acre. Cotton production is forecast at 20.2 million bales, with upland cotton accounting for 19.48 million bales and extra-long staple cotton at 726,000 bales.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

### BEEF

Walmart, the world's largest retailer, has entered the beef business. In early January, the industry giant opened a 200,000-square-foot processing facility in west Georgia aimed at supplying black Angus beef to over 500 stores across the Southeast. This represents a larger vision to create a streamlined supply chain for Walmart's beef.

-Brady Ragland, division director



## St. Clair County Farmers Get Social

Members of the St. Clair County Farmers Federation learned about social media etiquette during a Jan. 13 meeting in Ashville. From left are Alabama Farmers Federation Area 4 Organization Director Steven Blackmon; Donald Ray Walker; and Byron and Amy Buckner.



## Sweet Farm Visits In Montgomery County

Alabama Farmers Federation Area 7 Organization Director Guy Hall, left, visited Mike Keller Jan. 13 in Hope Hull. Keller is a Montgomery County beekeeper whose Southern Sweet Bee Co. produces honey and beeswax candles.

### Get Ag-tive

- **Scholarship applications** through the Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation are due Jan. 31 at [AlfaFarmers.org/scholarships](http://AlfaFarmers.org/scholarships). The \$1,750 scholarships will be awarded to up to 67 students in agriculture or forestry at Auburn University and Alabama A&M University.
- **Young Farmers Conference** registration closes Jan. 31 at [AlfaFarmers.org](http://AlfaFarmers.org). The conference is Feb. 28-March 1 in Mobile and features farm tours in Baldwin and Mobile counties. Foundation Night Out features musician Justin Jeansonne.
- **The Alabama Peanut Producers Association** will hold an election to select two nominees each for a member and alternate to the National Peanut Board (NPB) Feb. 6. Learn more at [ALPeanuts.com](http://ALPeanuts.com). The NPB then submits nominees to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, who makes the appointments.

### Dig Deeper

**Experienced and novice beekeepers** looking for more information about apiculture should attend the 25th Beekeeping Symposium in Clanton Feb. 1. The symposium features a variety of information about managing, producing and running a bee operation. Register at [aces.edu](http://aces.edu).

**Producers who updated irrigation** infrastructure in the 2019 calendar year are encouraged to apply for an irrigation tax credit. Questionnaires are due Jan. 31 at [agi.alabama.gov/s/irrigation](http://agi.alabama.gov/s/irrigation).

**A \$99 million wood pellet mill** is planned for Demopolis on the Tombigbee River so the pellets can be barged and loaded at the port in

Mobile. Tuscaloosa-based Westervelt is partnering with Canadian Pinnacle Renewable Energy for the facility, which should begin production in the second quarter of 2021.

**The Alabama Ag Expedition** will show Auburn University students the diversity of Alabama's largest industry March 8-13 during a tour sponsored by the Alabama Wheat & Feed Grain Producers. For just \$100 out of pocket, students earn two credit hours during the tour, which spans from the Tennessee Valley to the Gulf Coast. Know a student who'd be interested? Contact the Alabama Farmers Federation's Carla Hornady at [chornady@alfafarmers.org](mailto:chornady@alfafarmers.org) to learn more.

## Farm & Land Expo Seeks Exhibitors For Aug. 1

The Alabama Farm & Land Expo is seeking exhibitors for its event in Mobile Aug. 1, held in conjunction with the Alabama Farmers Federation's commodity-focused conference.

Interested? Contact the Federation's Brian Hardin at [bhardin@alfafarmers.org](mailto:bhardin@alfafarmers.org).

Over 1,000 attendees are expected at the Farm & Land Expo, including farmers, cattlemen, forest owners, equipment enthusiasts and more. Potential exhibitors include machinery dealers, agricultural lenders, land consultants, livestock health specialists, feed and seed companies and researchers.

## Extension Hosts Auxin Herbicide Training

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is providing auxin herbicide training throughout the state to fulfill Xtendimax, FeXapan and Engenia label requirements.

Meetings continue through March 16. Access the list of locations and register at [aces.edu](http://aces.edu).

The program is intended to help reduce herbicide drift incidents with susceptible crops. The program also provides information on technical application methods, tank cleanout and new chemistry.

The producer, certified applicator or person responsible for the application on resistant cotton and soybean varieties must receive this training. A commercial or private applicator permit is also required to purchase and apply dicamba to resistant crops.

### In Memory

**Harold McCool** of Gordo died Jan. 1. He was 80.

McCool was a former Alabama Farmers Federation state board member and past president of the Pickens County Farmers Federation.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Diane McCool; sons Chris McCool (Sherri) and Tim McCool (Tracie); and grandchildren Meredith Owens (John Morgan), Madison Dunn (Heath), and Austin (fiancée Julia Melvin), Ashleigh, Abigail, Mason, Asher, Elizabeth and Lila McCool.



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

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #310  
Montgomery, AL

## Tuberville Meets With Farmers

Tommy Tuberville, left, the FarmPAC-endorsed candidate for U.S. Senate, visited with members including Joe Dennis of Chilton County during a meeting in Shelby County Jan. 3. He reflected on experiences, shared his vision for service and voiced appreciation for the Alabama Farmers Federation's support.

**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.

## Walker Named Assistant Department Director

The Alabama Farmers Federation promoted 14-year organization veteran Mitt Walker to assistant director of the Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department in December.

Walker will continue to lead the Federation's national affairs efforts and the Catfish Division, in addition to managing agricultural programs. He will also help coordinate the policy development process and take the lead on international trade and the farm bill.

"I am so appreciative of the opportunity to continue working on behalf of our members in this new role and am thankful for the confidence the Federation's leadership has placed in me," said Walker, 44, a Troy University graduate.

Walker began his career with the Federation in June 2005 as a commodity director. In November 2011, he became national legislative programs director and resumed Catfish Division responsibilities in 2017.

He and wife Brandi have three children and live in Montgomery.



## Auburn Students Visit Farmers Federation

Auburn University College of Agriculture students visited the Alabama Farmers Federation home office in Montgomery Jan. 7 to learn more about the state's largest farm organization. Earlier in the day, they visited the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries (ADAI). From left are Federation Governmental & Agricultural Programs Department Director Brian Hardin, ag communications students Bill Taylor and Anna Louise Baker, and ADAI Communications Director Amy Belcher.