

Dicamba Use Allowed Through July 31

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said farmers have until July 31 to use existing supplies of dicamba herbicides, which were effectively banned by a federal appeals court last week.

The Alabama Farmers Federation's Carla Hornady said the order provides immediate relief but doesn't address long-term concerns.

"We appreciate EPA granting flexibility for farmers to utilize dicamba herbicides already purchased, but the court's decision still leaves producers without effective control for some invasive plants such as pigweed," said Hornady, commodity director for cotton, soybeans, and wheat and feed grains. "Farmers who have invested in dicamba-resistant crops as part of their conservation tillage practices are being forced to explore other options."

Hornady said the Federation will continue to work with researchers, crop protection manufacturers, officials and agencies to help farmers plan for the future.

According to EPA, the order will "mitigate some of the devastating economic consequences of the court's decision for growers, and particularly rural communities, at a time they are experiencing great stress due to...COVID-19."

EPA's order addresses sale, distribution and use of existing stocks of the three affected dicamba products – XtendiMax with vapor grip technology, Engenia and FeXapan.

Distribution or sale is prohibited except for ensuring proper disposal or return to the registrant.

Applicators may use existing stocks in possession on June 3, the effective date of the court decision.

Lowndes County Farm Earns Top Title



Triple E Farm in Lowndes County is Alabama's 2020 Farm of Distinction. The beef, poultry and pecan operation's Thomas and Melissa Ellis will compete in the Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest in October. From left are the Ellises, Alabama Farmers Cooperative's Samantha Carpenter and Alabama Farmers Federation President Jimmy Parnell.

COVID-19 Aid Applications Open

Alabama farmers hard hit by low commodity prices and market disruption caused by COVID-19 may apply through Aug. 28 for relief under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Alabama Farmers Federation National Affairs Director Mitt Walker said farmers eagerly anticipated details of the \$16 billion program.

"Farmers in Alabama appreciate President Trump, USDA Secretary Perdue and Congress for recognizing the detrimental impact COVID-19 has had on the industry," Walker said. "Securing our nation's food supply is critical, and the virus dealt farmers another blow when many were already having a tough time making ends meet."

CFAP will provide up to \$16 billion in direct relief payments for farmers and ranchers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Producers will receive 80% of their maximum total payment upon

approval. The remaining will be paid later as funds are available. Payments are limited to \$250,000.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is hosting webinars related to CFAP. Register at tinyurl.com/CFAPwebinars.

- June 11 at 3 p.m. CT for dairy and non-specialty crop producers
- June 16 at 3 p.m. CT for non-specialty crops and livestock producers
- June 18 at 3 p.m. CT on FSA programs in the time of coronavirus

Federation staff are working closely with the FSA to assist farmers as they apply for funds.

The Federation also encourages farmers concerned about loan repayments due to COVID-19 complications to contact their local lender.

USDA's CFAP Call Center provides application assistance at (877) 508-8364.

Visit farmers.gov/cfap to learn more.

Ag Accolades

Brentwood Farms of Bibb County was named a finalist for the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Outstanding Commercial Producer of the Year Award. The farm, owned by Chip and Misty Burkes and managed by Trouble Moody, has approximately 400 Simmental and Angus-cross cows.

Sidney Phelps of Tallapoosa County was named to the Greenhouse Product News 40 Under 40 list, which recognizes up-and-coming professionals. Phelps is Bonnie Plants' e-commerce director.

Auburn Ag Students Intern With Federation

The Alabama Farmers Federation welcomed Auburn University (AU) seniors Kaycee Wright and Bill Taylor for summer internships.

Wright, an animal sciences major with a concentration in equine science, is



Wright

working with Ag in the Classroom (AITC) and the Federation Women's Leadership Division. Wright, 20, is a Cullman County native pursuing a minor in communications. She will develop AITC educational materials and work on agricultural education and promotion; advocacy; and leadership development. She chairs AU's Young Farmers program.

Meanwhile, agricultural communications student Taylor is an ag policy intern with the Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department.



Taylor

The Tuscaloosa County native, 21, will advocate for agriculture; produce ag policy communications; and strengthen his understanding of government. Taylor is a long snapper for the Auburn Tigers football team.



Poultry Farmers Discuss Regulation Updates

The Alabama Farmers Federation State Poultry Committee members and organization staffers met at the Montgomery home office June 5 to discuss possible updates to CAFO regulations, in addition to issues farmers are facing due to the coronavirus. Greg Edwards, left, of Russell County was one of the committee members in attendance.

COMMODITY CORNER

AFVGA

Sweet Grown Alabama, the state marketing program for agricultural products, debuted SweetGrownAlabama.org May 12. The interactive website features member profiles, a "What's in Season" page and a user-friendly database for consumers to find member growers across the state.

-Hunter McBrayer, division director

PEANUTS

Consumers have turned to traditional comfort food such as peanut butter during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Peanut Board reports peanut butter and peanut snack nut sales increased with the stay-at-home orders during March and April. March peanut butter sales were up 75% over 2019, and April sales were up 19.5% over 2019.

-Jacob Davis, division director

COTTON, SOYBEAN, WHEAT & FEED GRAIN

Landowners are flooded with marketing from "liquid lime" companies, which claim to increase soil pH and improve crop yields with rates of one to five gallons per acre. Visit tinyurl.com/liquidlime to read an article breaking down the science behind liming materials, which will help landowners make smart investments to maintain pH.

-Carla Hornady, divisions director

DAIRY

Help Alabama dairy farmers celebrate National Dairy Month in June. Alabama is home to over 4,500 dairy cows that produced 7 million gallons of milk last year. The average dairy cow in Alabama produced 4.6 gallons of milk per day and 1,400 gallons of milk annually.

-Russ Durrance, division director

WILDLIFE

Alabama's recreational red snapper season is off to a hot start. A reported 176,782 pounds were harvested opening weekend. Marine Resources can adjust seasons to allow anglers to catch as many fish as possible. Alabama's private recreational season is set to run Friday-Monday with a tentative closing date of July 19. The closing date may be adjusted to ensure the state's limit of 1,122,662 pounds.

-William Green, division director

BEEF

The Department of Justice has formally demanded information from the largest U.S. beef packers (Tyson, Cargill, JBS and National) regarding potential antitrust violations. Allegations began after a 2019 Tyson plant fire led to dramatic swings in the cattle market, which have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

-Brady Ragland, division director

Events & Deadlines

July 12-14 - Alabama Poultry & Egg Association Annual Meeting in Destin

- Register by June 18 at AlabamaPoultry.org

July 16-18 - Southern Peanut Growers Conference at Panama City Beach

- SouthernPeanutFarmers.org

July 23 - Peanut Referendum

- ALPeanuts.com

July 30-Aug. 2 - Federation Farm & Land Expo in Mobile

- Register by June 25 at AlfaFarmers.org.

Nov. 9-10 - Alfa Youth Leadership Conference in Columbiana

- Register by Sept. 9 at AlfaFarmers.org.



Tuscaloosa Farmers Donate To COVID-19 Relief

The Tuscaloosa County Farmers Federation (TCFF) donated \$2,500 to the DCH Foundation May 18 to help health care workers affected by COVID-19. From left are DCH's June Murray, TCFF President Jim Lavender and Women's Leadership Committee Chair Debbie Lavender.

Get Ag-tive

The Farming Feeds Alabama Photo Contest is seeking snapshots depicting Alabama agriculture throughout 2020. Submit entries at AlfaFarmers.org/PhotoContest.

The June Agricultural Survey through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is underway. The agency will contact farmers to determine crop

acreage and stock levels as of June 1. **American Farm Bureau's Ag Innovation Challenge** applications close July 31. The contest highlights entrepreneurs addressing traditional challenges, in addition to new challenges in light of COVID-19. More than \$145,000 will be awarded. Learn more by visiting fb.org/challenge.

In Memory

David Pearce of Browns died May 21. He was 72.

The Dallas County farmer was the 1994 Alabama Farm of Distinction winner; a founder of the Alabama Catfish Producers Association; and former Catfish Farmers of America president.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Frances Weissinger Pearce; sons David Pearce Jr. (Michelle) and Will Pearce (Beth); and eight grandchildren.

Bill Hixon of Banks died May 28. He was 87.

He served on the Pike County Farmers Federation board and was inducted into the Alabama Cattlemen's Association Hall of Fame.

Hixon was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Betty Dickinson Hixon. He is survived by daughters Kim Wise (Layne) and Beth Collier (John); son Billy Hixon (Laura); seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Milton Johnson of Statesville died June 1. He was 86.

Johnson was an Autauga County Farmers Federation board member and FarmPAC representative.

He was preceded in death by two sons, Wayne Milton Johnson and Craig Alvin Johnson. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Jeannie Rainwater Johnson; son Paul Whitson Johnson; and five grandchildren.



Young Farmers Donation Keeps Market Clean

The Talladega County Young Farmers (TCYF) donated hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to the Sylacauga Farmers Market June 5. TCYF Chair Chase Hammock, also a State Young Farmers Committee member, made the donation to Margaret Courtney of Penton Farms.

Ag Fares Well In Spring Legislative Session

During an abbreviated spring Legislative Session, the General Fund (GF) and Education Trust Fund (ETF) budgets increased, including funding for programs important to Alabama farmers.

The \$7.2 billion ETF budget, which goes into effect Oct. 1, was the largest in state history. Overall, the Career Tech line item was \$8.3 million, including \$451,900 for agribusiness education programs such as Ag in the Classroom.

Funding at Auburn University included \$250,000 to revive the livestock judging program.

The Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station saw an increase of \$673,000 to \$34.3 million, while funding for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System increased \$707,000 to \$36 million. The Rural Broadband Grant Program through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) was level funded at \$20 million.

In the \$2.4 billion GF budget, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries received almost \$15 million, including new funds for the

Sweet Grown Alabama state agricultural brand, \$250,000; and Farm to School, \$120,000.

Funding for the Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (CAFO) program at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management was preserved at \$575,000. The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) received an additional \$1.6 million for a total of almost \$10.4 million. AFC appropriations included \$1.7 million for rural and community fire protection.

Funding for Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) programs increased to \$4 million. The Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC) received \$2.9 million, including more than \$81,000 in matching funds for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to increase on-farm irrigation, and more than \$350,000 in matching funds for the Feral Swine Program. SWCC received an additional \$200,000 in the ETF for a total of \$2.1 million, while the education appropriation for RC&D was up to \$3.1 million.

Partner Profile: Auburn's Pate Receives New Role

A familiar face has taken a new position in agriculture research. Gregory Pate is now director of research operations for outlying units at the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES).

Pate has been director of E.V. Smith Research Center at Auburn University (AU) since 2008 and was formerly associate director. In this position, Pate oversaw research in the largest agricultural facility in Alabama.

In this new role, Pate will coordinate and oversee innovative research projects that support agriculture and forestry conducted at all 15 AAES regional units.

Pate holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in agronomy and soils from AU. He began his career as a gin manager for Milstead Farm Group.



Pate

Monday Joins Federation As Area 2 Director

Tyler Monday started work with the Alabama Farmers Federation June 1 as Area 2 organization director. In this role, Monday will coordinate activities of county Farmers Federations in Cullman, Fayette, Lamar, Marion, Walker and Winston counties.

The Marshall County native studied horticulture at Auburn University (AU), earning bachelor's, master's and Ph.D.



Monday

degrees in the discipline. As an AU research fellow, he managed trials on fruit, vegetable and pecan production at sites across Alabama.

Monday said he's excited to spend more time talking with farmers out in the field and advocating for the industry.

He plans to reside in Cullman County with his wife, Jennifer, and 3-month-old son, Copeland.



Donation Helps Protect Catfish Plant Workers

Alabama Agriculture & Industries Commissioner Rick Pate delivered safety masks to catfish plants – Consolidated Catfish in Eutaw, pictured, and Harvest Select in Uniontown – May 18. The masks were for employees and their families to prevent the spread of COVID-19. From left are Operations Manager Donnie Wedgworth; Pate; Supply Manager Virginia Finch; Receptionist Melonee Coats; Manager Tonia Osburn; Plant Manager Gerald Sims; and Alabama Catfish Committee Chairman Sid Nelson of Sumter County.