CULTIVATOR
News from the Alabama Farmers Federation •AlfaFarmers.org
May 13, 2019

Commodity Meeting Heads To Chattanooga

Hundreds of farmers will head for the Appalachian foothills during the Alabama Farmers Federation's 47th Commodity Producers Conference Aug. 1-3 in Chattanooga. Registration closes June 14 at AlfaFarmers.org.

The conference begins with the second annual Hay & Forage Spokesperson Contest, followed by a welcome banquet. Tours depart for stops in Alabama, Tennessee and Georgia the next morning.

- **Blue Tour:** Tsali Notch Vineyard, Dinner Bell Restaurant & General Store, Sweetwater Valley Farm
- **Green Tour:** Chickamauga Battlefield, White Oak Initiative, Brown-Forman Cooperage
- **Orange Tour:** Riverbend Farm, Cherokee Gin Co.
- **Pink Tour:** Lodge Factory Store, Gorham's Bluff, Unclaimed Baggage
- **Red Tour:** Apple Valley Orchard and Mill, Tsali Notch Vineyard, Will Estes Industrial Hemp Farm
- **Yellow Tour:** Tennessee River Music Inc., Lookout Mountain Genetics, Sand Mountain Research & Extension Center, Circle R Hay Farm

Day 3 seminars range from social media and state branding to industrial hemp, highway regulations and timber. A general session focuses on estate planning.

The meeting closes with results from Young Farmers contests, including the Outstanding Young Farm Family, Excellence in Agriculture winner and Discussion Meet finalists.

Entertainment will be Linda Davis and Lenny LeBlanc.

Farmers Explore Alfalfa's Forage Future

About 40 Alabama farmers learned about producing high-quality, high-value forage during the Alfalfa in the South workshop May 7. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System coordinated the event, which had sessions at Cattlemen's Park in Troy and Steve Stroud's Goshen farm in Pike County. Stroud, third from left, chairs the Alabama Farmers Federation State Hay & Forage Committee, which helped sponsor the field day.

Agriculture Census Results Released

The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Alabama office recently released 2017 Census of Agriculture information.

Key Alabama highlights, compared to figures from the 2012 census, include:

- The state had 40,592 farms in 2017, down from 43,223 farms in 2012.
- Females made up 34% of farmers in 2017, up from 13% in 2012.
- 91% of farms are operated by families or individuals, a minimal decrease from 2012.
- Farms comprised 8.58 million acres in 2017, down from 8.9 million acres in 2012.
- Farmers sold $5.98 billion of ag products in 2017, compared to $5.57 billion in 2012. It cost $4.61 billion to produce these products in 2017, down from $4.74 billion.
- Poultry and eggs contributed 87% of the total livestock, poultry and products sold, up from 85.2%.
- Alabama ranks second in the U.S. for broilers sold, quail inventory, catfish value sold and peanuts produced.
- Top-10 counties in terms of number of farms are DeKalb, Cullman, Marshall, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Morgan, Limestone, Blount and Madison.
- 1,813 Alabama farm operators reported selling products directly to consumers. In 2017, sales totaled almost $9.4 million, up 2.2%.
- The average farmer in 2017 was 58 years old, down from 59.3 years old.
- Alabama farms with Internet access rose from 65% to 73% in 2017.
- 772 Alabama farms produced on-farm renewable energy, up 208% from 2012.

Visit nass.usda.gov/AgCensus to learn more.

Federation, Auburn Leadership Gather

Alabama Farmers Federation and Auburn University (AU) agriculture and forestry leaders held their biannual meeting April 30 in Auburn to discuss issues affecting farmers. From left are Alabama Peanut Producers Association Executive Director Jacob Davis, AU Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department Chair Joshua Duke and Federation Area 7 Organization Director Guy Hall.

Cotton Blue Disease Fact Sheet Now Available

To help farmers identify a new cotton disease, Alabama Cooperative Extension System professionals have compiled a fact sheet on cotton leaf roll dwarf virus (cotton blue disease or CLRDV-AL). Cotton blue has been detected in 21 Alabama counties.

Access the fact sheet at tinyurl.com/CottonBlueFacts.

Infected plants exhibit stunting due to shortened internodes, leaf rolling, leaf petiole and vein reddening, distorted juvenile leaves, reduced flower and boll size, and sterility.

Severity in 2018 was greater in late-planted cotton. Extension recommends farmers in high-risk areas plant cotton in early to mid-May. Early planting, which may increase boll rot and hardlock in south Alabama, was previously recommended to manage CLRDV.

Get Ag-tive

Young Farmers applications for Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture contests are due June 1 at AlfaYoungFarmers.org. Contests will be held at the Alabama Farmers Federation's Commodity Producers Conference in Chattanooga Aug. 3. Winners receive a four-wheeler and zero-turn mower, respectively.

Auburn Agricultural Alumni Association Hall of Honor and Pioneer Award applications are due June 10. Awards recognize individuals who made significant contributions to the field of agriculture in Alabama through their work and personal lives. Learn more at ag.auburn.edu.

ReConnect Rural Broadband Pilot Program applications are available at reconnect.usda.gov. At least $600 million will be distributed for rural broadband projects. Funds allow the federal government to partner with the private sector and rural communities to build modern broadband infrastructure in areas with insufficient internet service.

The Built Ford Proud Sweepstakes gives Federation members the chance to win a two-year lease on a new Ford vehicle. Text SWEEPS to 46786 to enter. No purchase necessary.

COMMODITY CORNER

GREENHOUSE, NURSERY & SOD

Farmers recently met with the Department of Agriculture & Industries' Plant Protection Unit in Irvington. Along with Commissioner Rick Pate, they toured Cottage Hills Nursery's fulfillment center to highlight concerns among online plant distributors, showcase the industry's future and discuss solutions to roadblocks growers face selling and shipping plants across state lines.

-Hunter McBrayer, division director

BEEF, MEAT GOAT & SHEEP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency released insurance enhancements aimed at strengthening risk management and smoothing unpredictable market fluctuations for livestock producers. Farmers can protect gross margin with Livestock Gross Margin or declining market prices with Livestock Risk Protection. Programs go into effect July 1. Learn more at usda.gov.

-Brady Ragland, divisions director

WHEAT & FEED GRAIN

The National Corn Growers Association's National Corn Yield Contest deadline is July 31. State and national winners are recognized at the 2020 Commodity Classic. Learn more at ncga.com.

-Carla Hornady, division director

DAIRY

A new web-based tool will help dairy producers evaluate scenarios using different coverage levels through the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, USDA announced. DMC replaces the Dairy Margin Protection Program. Sign-ups begin June 17. Access the tool at fsa.usda.gov/dmc-tool.

-Brian Hardin, Governmental & Ag Programs Department director

WILDLIFE

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council approved Amendment 50, which allows a better-balanced red snapper season. The amendment goes into effect in 2020 with approval of the secretary of commerce, gives each state control over its snapper season, and allows leeway in size and bag limits within federal guidelines.

-William Green, division director

PEANUTS

According to a National Peanut Board survey, peanut consumption is rising, especially among millennials. Younger generations view peanuts and peanut butter as a good-for-you natural food, a source of protein, part of a well-balanced diet and a good source of nutrients. Fifty-seven percent of millennials surveyed eat peanut butter weekly.

-Jacob Davis, division director

Events & Deadlines

May 29-31 - Alabama Ag in the Classroom Summer Institute in Florence

June 4-7 - Alabama Farmers Federation Beef Tour to Mississippi

June 14 - Registration closes for Federation's 47th Commodity Producers Conference in Chattanooga Aug. 1-3

- *AlfaFarmers.org*

June 17 - Last possible day of the legislative session

June 23-25 - Alabama Agribusiness Council Annual Meeting in Orange Beach

June 26 - Irrigation Field Day at Posey Farms in Town Creek

- *Email bortiz@auburn.edu to learn more*

July 11-14 - Federation Presidents Conference in Gulf Shores

July 18-20 - Southern Peanut Growers Conference at Panama City Beach

- *Register by June 30 at SouthernPeanutFarmers.org*

July 30 - Alabama Precision Ag Workshop in Birmingham

- *tinyurl.com/PrecisionAg19*

Kids Enjoy Farm Day Fun In Blount County

Elementary students attended Blount County Kids Day on the Farm May 3, where they learned about different commodities – such as cotton, peanuts, vegetables, forestry, animals and more – grown in Alabama. Cullman County farmer Lee Haynes, right, shared facts about table eggs during the event.

Ag Accolades

- **Ana Carolina Behel** of Weeden Elementary School in Florence was named Alabama's Teacher of the Year May 8. Over the next year, she will travel the state in a Chevy Traverse. Alfa Insurance provides the vehicle, and the Alabama Farmers Federation sponsors insurance.
- **Ray's Restaurant** in Dothan won the Bama's Best Peach Cobbler contest after judges visited the eatery in late April. Owner Christi Peterson won $300 from the Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association, which sponsored the contest.
- **The Bama's Best Fried Chicken** contest, held on Facebook, won the Special Events Medallion Award from the Public Relations Council of Alabama April 8.

Winston County Farmers Visit State House

Winston County Farmers Federation (WCFF) leaders met with legislators at the Alabama State House April 16. They talked agricultural issues with Sens. Greg Reed, R-Jasper, and Garlan Gudger, R-Cullman. From left are Randy Moody, Gudger, WCFF President Darrell Lee and Mark Finley.

Obituaries

John Robert Rankin of Faunsdale died April 5. He was 95.

A former dairyman, he served on the Marengo County Farmers Federation board.

Rankin is survived by wife of 70 years Doris Strobel Rankin; daughters Kay Rankin Beckett, Ann Rankin Price (Ray) and Mary Rankin Jackson (Bob); sons John Patrick Rankin (Erin) and James Robert Rankin (Amy); 20 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

William "Bill" Boyd of Gadsden died April 11. He was 84.

He served on the Etowah County Farmers Federation board for 56 years.

Boyd is survived by wife of 67 years Shirley Jane Jennings Boyd; daughter Janet; sons David and Heath (Rebecca); four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Alfa Funds Wildlife Scholarships

The Alfa Foundation recently donated $10,000 to supply four $2,500 scholarships for the University of Montevallo's President's Outdoor Scholars Program. From left are Outdoor Scholars Program Director William Crawford and Shelby County Farmers Federation President Jimmy Bice, who presented the donation at a banquet May 3.

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Davis Named Director Of Peanut Producers

Jacob Davis joined the Alabama Peanut Producers Association (APPA) as its executive director May 1. APPA serves over 900 peanut farmers and is an affiliate of the Alabama Farmers Federation.

Davis takes the helm after a 25-year career focused on agriscience education.

"I've been privileged to work closely with individuals from the Alabama Farmers Federation through my involvement with Alabama FFA," said Davis, 46, who was raised on a cattle farm near Opp. "I'm excited to join this great organization and work with the Alabama Peanut Producers Association."

As executive director, Davis will monitor federal policy issues impacting peanut farmers; oversee promotions for Alabama-grown peanuts; work on research projects with stakeholders such as Auburn University and the National Peanut Board; and manage daily operations of APPA's Dothan office.

Davis is a two-time Auburn University graduate. He and wife Sonna live in Kinston with son Jaken, 16.

Equine Leaders Assemble In Montgomery

The State Equine Committee met April 11 at Alabama Farmers Federation headquarters in Montgomery. Committee members were introduced to new Equine Division Director Brady Ragland and set goals for the year. Federation Governmental & Agricultural Programs Department Director Brian Hardin also gave the committee a tour of the home office. From left are Hardin, Ragland, State Equine Committee Chair Amy Hegeman of Calhoun County, Jenny Foster of Crenshaw County and Frank Chirico of Coffee County.