

Partnership Promotes Catfish In Schools

Young chefs across Alabama soon will create catfish culinary delights through a partnership of Alabama catfish farmers and state school officials.

Through the inaugural Catfish Culinary Challenge, Alabama Catfish Producers will donate 600 pounds of U.S. Farm-Raised catfish to 40 Alabama high schools. Student chefs and food service worker students from those schools are part of Alabama's Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) programs.

"We are excited about the opportunity to partner with these teachers and culinary programs across the state," said Sumter County catfish farmer Sid Nelson. "Students may be familiar with the delicious taste of U.S. Farm-Raised catfish served in restaurants, but we want them to create new catfish culinary dishes inside their classrooms."

Nelson is state committee chairman of the Alabama Catfish Producers, a division of the Alabama Farmers Federation. He said farmers will provide frozen catfish fillets to the first 40 schools that sign up through the Alabama State Department of Education program. Farmers will also educate instructors and students about the safe, sustainable way U.S. Farm-Raised catfish is grown and processed.

The partnership includes a teacher field trip to a catfish farm.

Additionally, the Alabama Catfish Producers will sponsor the FCCLA State Culinary Arts Competition in March.

To apply, teachers are encouraged to contact April Shrader at ashrader@ALSDE.edu.

Rick Pate Listening Tour



Farmers Wendy and Jamie Yeager welcomed Alabama Agriculture Commissioner Rick Pate to their Orrville row crop farm Sept. 4 as part of the commissioner's Ag Listening Tour. Pate also visited the farms of Sam Givhan in Safford and Ken and Gray Cogle in Marion Junction. Following lunch with Dallas County Farmers Federation board members at Central Alabama Farmers Co-op in Selma, Pate discussed issues like trade, labor and disaster assistance.

Farmers Applaud Regulatory Relief

Farmers are praising changes to rules related to endangered species, trucking and water as the Trump administration continues to roll back regulations impacting commerce and private property rights.

Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service announced rule revisions to ensure clear, consistent and efficient enforcement of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The rule affirms the ESA's requirement that listing, delisting or reclassifying a species be based solely on "the best scientific and commercial information."

The rule change reinstates ESA's requirement for critical habitat to be where threatened or endangered species are present at the time of listing. Unoccupied areas could only be considered in special circumstances. Additionally, the Fish and Wildlife Service rescinded its "blanket rule," which gave threatened species the same

protections as endangered species.
Hours-of-Service

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration also announced a proposal to update hours-of-service regulations for commercial vehicle drivers.

The rules would give truckers additional flexibility for taking required breaks and sleeper rest. It would extend mileage and allowed hours of service under the short-haul exception.

Waters of the United States

Farmers also welcomed progress toward repealing the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule.

A ruling in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia found the Environmental Protection Agency overstepped the Administrative Procedure Act, which lays out the most basic rules governing how agencies propose and establish federal regulations.

Farmers Federation Supports Rural Medicine Program

For the 14th year, the Alabama Farmers Federation provided educational support to future rural doctors. During a white coat ceremony Aug. 20, Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan presented \$500 book stipends to 11 Rural

Medicine Program (RMP) students.

The RMP is a training track in the UAB School of Medicine to produce primary care physicians for rural Alabama. All students are from rural Alabama and are dedicated to returning to rural areas

to serve those communities. The track begins with a pre-matriculation year at Auburn University, where students learn about the needs of rural communities and prepare for medical school.



Front row from left are RMP Clinical Preceptor Dr. Tate Hinkle; Miranda Worley of Grove Oak; Alyssa Lambert of Remlap; Madison McLeod of Waverly; Ellie Pitchford of Scottsboro; Candace Wilson of Tuskegee; and Pinyan. Back row from left are RMP Clinical Director Dr. Keith Bufford MD; Dalton Frederick of Hamilton; Tyler Criswell of Snead; Jacob Megehee of Scottsboro; Audrey Driver of Dozier; Peyton Robison of Meridianville; Bayley Atkins of Scottsboro; and East Alabama Medical Center Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bill Golden.

Events & Deadlines

Sept. 14 - Ag Roundup in Auburn

- Ag.Auburn.edu

Sept. 19 - Southeastern Hay Contest application deadline

- SEHayContest.com

Sept. 23 - Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation (AFAF) scholarship reception in Auburn

Sept. 24 - Federation Policy Development Meeting and FarmPAC Meeting in Montgomery

Oct. 4-14 - Alabama National Fair in Montgomery

- ALNationalFair.org

Oct. 8-9 - New County Presidents Orientation in Montgomery

Oct. 22-24 - Alabama Landowners Conference in Prattville

- Register by Oct. 8 at TREASUREforest.org

Nov. 8 - 4th annual AFAF Skeet Shoot in Alpine

Nov. 21-22 - Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Conference in Clanton

- Register by Oct. 21: AFVGA.org

Dec. 8-9 - Federation annual meeting in Montgomery

COMMODITY CORNER

AFVGA

Registration for the AFVGA Conference Nov. 21-22 is open. Over 20 seminars will cover a variety of topics including strawberry disease, fertigation, industrial hemp and orchard weed management. Visit afvga.org to learn more.

-Hunter McBrayer, executive director

BEEF

Early this month, I traveled to Japan with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). Our group made retail, foodservice and ranch visits and learned how American producers can capitalize on the Japanese market, which now allows American beef to enter the market regardless of age. USMEF estimates expanded access could increase U.S. beef sales to Japan 7-10%.

-Brady Ragland, division director

FORESTRY

Great Southern Wood's Abbeville Fiber facility in Henry County will bring 115 jobs to the area. Abbeville Fiber received its first load of logs in July and will increase production over the next year to accept 80-90 loads per day. The \$40-million investment to renovate the former WestPoint Stevens building is the largest in Henry County's history.

-William Green, division director

PORK

As we transition into fall weather and add new-crop corn into feed, we can expect to see an anticipated rise in market weights for Alabama hogs. What better time for this to happen than with International Bacon Day, also celebrated this month. Grab a BLT and enjoy the cooler temperatures this September.

-Russ Durrance, division director

PEANUTS

The National Peanut Board recently launched a new page for school nutrition professionals: PeanutsInSchools.org. The page is a repository of articles addressing common questions and concerns about peanuts in schools, from peanut nutrition and peanut recipes to food allergen management.

-Jacob Davis, executive director

COTTON

The National Cotton Council has initiated a pilot of the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol, a program designed to confirm and increase awareness that U.S. cotton producers farm responsibly and strive for continuous improvement. Producers' first step in the program is completing a self-assessment covering nine categories. The protocol will be fully implemented in 2020. Learn more at trustuscotton.org.

-Carla Hornady, division director



Annual Meeting Season Is Winding Down

The Tallapoosa County Farmers Federation (TCFF) held its annual meeting Aug. 27. Members reviewed the year's work, celebrated accomplishments and heard from speakers such as Alabama Farmers Federation Southeast Area Vice President George Jeffcoat of Houston County. Jeffcoat, left, is pictured with TCFF President Jacob Hodnett.

2020 Hemp Applications Open Sept. 23-Oct. 31

Applications for the 2020 industrial hemp growing season will be open Sept. 23-Oct. 31 at agi.alabama.gov.

There is a \$200 non-refundable fee, and each applicant must submit a criminal background check. There is also a 1-acre growing location minimum.

Questions? Contact Gail Ellis at (334) 240-3713 or gail.ellis@agi.alabama.gov.

Obituaries

Dorothy Evers Eckl of Lauderdale County died Aug. 17. She was 93.

Eckl was a longtime county Women's Leadership Committee member and food price surveyor.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, John J. Eckl. She is survived by daughters Marguerite Eckl, Claire Eckl (Larry Sexton) and Jean Elliott (Steve); four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Caroline Smith Batchelder of Phenix City died Aug. 20. She was 92.

Batchelder was a dedicated member of the Russell County Women's Leadership Committee and was passionate about Farm-City projects.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 66 years, James C. Batchelder. She is survived by four nieces and nine nephews.

Notice Of The Sheep And Goat Referendum

The Alabama Sheep & Goat Checkoff will conduct a referendum Oct. 22, 2019, to determine if the program should be continued for five more years at the current collection rate of 50 cents per head of sheep or goat sold in the state. The program funds sheep and goat research, product promotion and farmer education.

Any producer of goats and/or sheep in the state of Alabama is eligible to cast a vote but must vote in person at their local Alabama Cooperative Extension System office. Producers will be able to vote between 8 a.m. and the close of business.

For more information regarding the referendum, contact Brady Ragland at (334) 613-4221 or bragland@alfafarmers.org.

Ag In Action

Sweet Grown Alabama

membership applications open Sept. 15. To learn more about the state branding program, contact Ellie Watson at (334) 399-7748 or visit SweetGrownAlabama.com.

Farm Bureau Ag Innovation

Challenge applications are due Sept. 30 at bit.ly/300HcVb. Entrepreneurs

will compete for \$145,000 in startup funds as they showcase business innovations in food and agriculture.

Bill Dozier was named head of Auburn University's (AU) Poultry Science Department Sept. 1. The College of Agriculture alumnus joined the AU faculty in 2008 and is a noted poultry nutritionist.



Program To Expand Irrigation Opportunities

An Alabama Irrigation Initiative Meeting for farmers in the Choc-Pea Watershed was held Aug. 20. Experts shared information and gathered feedback about cost-share programs for Coffee, Dale and Geneva counties and parts of Barbour, Bullock, Covington, Henry and Houston counties. From left are Coffee County's Clint Patterson and Jonathan Sanders, Alabama Soil & Water Conservation Committee's Bill Puckett and State Sen. Donnie Chesteen, R-Geneva.



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Farmers, Legislative Aide Talk Ag

Farmers in the 4th Congressional District met with Gregor Catto, the ag legislative assistant for U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, Aug. 28. Catto, right, discussed trade and hours-of-service regulations with Ben Haynes of Cullman County, left. He also discussed labor issues with Jeremy Calvert and livestock production and markets with Billy Gilley, both of Cullman County.

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BL Harbert Selected To Build Alabama Farm Center

The Alabama Farmers Agriculture Foundation (AFAF) recently selected BL Harbert International LLC to construct the Alabama Farm Center at Alfa Centennial Park in Chilton County.

The 500-acre project is expected to break ground in spring of 2020.

Foundation Chairman Jimmy Parnell said selecting BL Harbert International

is a major step toward making the Alabama Farm Center a reality.

"We look forward to working with the Harbert team to bring this project to fruition," said Parnell, who also serves as Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Insurance president. "Harbert is well respected and has extensive experience in managing large economic

development projects. We're convinced the Alabama Farm Center at Alfa Centennial Park will be a centerpiece for Alabama agriculture and an economic engine for the state."

The preliminary master plan includes a 5,000-plus seat air-conditioned arena; 150,000-square-foot exhibition building with meeting rooms; 400-stall horse barn; 1,125-tie stall cattle barn; 400 recreational vehicle (RV) hookups; and other arenas and buildings.

Alfa Centennial Park will be located off Interstate 65 at Exit 212 between Alabama 145 and County Road 43.

"Our team is honored to be the construction partner in bringing such a significant project to life," said Johnny Garlington, president of the U.S. Group of BL Harbert International.



Federation President Jimmy Parnell visited the Nebraska State Fair Aug. 28 to glean ideas for the Alabama Farm Center. Parnell, left, is pictured with Nebraska State Fair Executive Director Lori Cox and Nebraska Farm Bureau President Steve Nelson.