

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION

GRASSROOTS LEADER NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2014

NEW MEMBERSHIP BILLING/MEMBERSHIP CARD: Our membership billing and membership card have new looks. We began using the format in February 2014. The new billing design allows us to provide more information on the many services and benefits available to Farm Bureau members. The newly-designed membership card is made of a more durable material than the old paper version and is an attractive card that our members will be proud to show when they are taking advantage of their membership benefits and services.

SUPER BULLDOG WEEKEND: Make plans to stop by the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation booth during Super Bulldog Weekend on April 11-12 at Mississippi State University. Visitors will enjoy food and fun activities while learning about Farm Bureau and Mississippi agriculture. For more information, contact Nancy Britt at (601) 977-4230.

SUMMER COMMODITY MEETINGS: Summer commodity meetings are in the process of being scheduled. See the Calendar of Events for a listing of the dates we have thus far through July. For more information, call Nancy Britt at (601) 977-4230.

MAGNOLIA BEEF AND POULTRY EXPO: The 11th Annual Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo is set for April 10 at the Smith County Ag Complex in Raleigh. This year's expo will offer educational seminars dealing with topics such as pelvic measurements and their importance in replacement heifers and the new DEQ permits and poultry producers. The trade show will display approximately 50 distributors, ranging from financial institutions to equipment, feed, and seed dealers. Approximately 400 producers attend annually.

2014 SECRETARIES' CONFERENCE: Make plans to attend the 2014 Secretaries' Conference on April 22-23 at the Mississippi Ag and Forestry Museum in Jackson. For more information, contact Merlene Partridge at (601) 977-4233.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: The annual Women's Leadership Conference will be held April 25 at the MFBF Building in Jackson. Speakers will address issues of interest to farm women, and participants will have an opportunity to enjoy Ag in the Classroom activities. For more information, contact Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245.

AITC WORKSHOPS: The Teacher/Volunteer Ag in the Classroom (AITC) Workshops are scheduled for June 10, 11, and 12 in Hernando, Cleveland, and Hattiesburg, respectively. The sessions will include speakers and AITC activities that can be used in classrooms. For more information, contact Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245.

YOUTH SAFETY CAMP DATES & DEADLINE: The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Youth Safety Camp will be held July 28-31 at the Gray Center in Madison County. The application and \$100 registration fee are due by June 27. Contact your county Farm Bureau office for more information and about sponsoring your student. Additional information can be found on our website at www.msfb.org or by calling Angela Thompson at (601) 977-4242.

WOMEN'S AG TOUR: The two-day Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Women's Ag Tour will be held Oct. 2-3 in the Mississippi Delta. Participants will visit a catfish processing facility, Staplcoth, and the Museum of the Mississippi Delta (formerly Cottonlandia Museum) in Greenwood as well as Indianola Pecan House and the B.B. King Museum in Indianola. The tour will include the Catfish Museum and Welcome Center, Ethel Wright Mohamed Stitchery Museum, and Sky Lake Boardwalk in Belzoni as well as Mont Helena in Rolling Fork. If you'd like to participate, contact your county Farm Bureau or the MFBF Women's Program at (601) 977-4245.

MFBF PUSHES WILD HOG LEGISLATION: After a lengthy discussion and a failed attempt to ban transportation of wild hogs, the Mississippi House and Senate have agreed to a compromise piece of legislation. The agreement raises the fine from a Class III (\$25-\$100) to a Class II (\$100-\$500) for those caught transporting wild hogs per head, while leaving the permit system for legal transportation in place. There is also a one-year loss of hunting and fishing privileges, and if a person is not in good standing with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, they do not have to issue a transportation permit. The 24-hour hotline for receiving a transportation permit for free is still in place. The bill passed both houses yesterday and is on its way to the governor for his signature.

MFBF PROVIDES FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO RMA: On March 18, MFBF President Randy Knight issued a letter to Michael Alston, Associate Administrator, and Mike Davis, Regional Office Director, USDA Risk Management Agency, containing the formal set of final recommendations from the 2013 MFBF Crop Insurance Task Force. Knight stated, "We are pleased to finalize our recommendations with accompanying support data to RMA. Within the packet of recommendations, we requested RMA look at shortening the late period for all zones, adding five Delta counties to the earlier planting date zone, and requested a new zone with a later final planting date for the northeast corner of the state in the corn program. We also requested that RMA review the t-yield data on the peanut program and look at adding soybean and corn programs for many counties in the southern part of the state that do not have a rate at this time. I want to thank the MFBF Crop Insurance Committee for putting forth these recommendations. On March 31, we met with staff from the RMA regional office in Flowood and had a great discussion with them on the recommendations. We look forward to more dialogue with them as they conduct their review of these issues."

FARM FAMILIES OF MISSISSIPPI 2014 CAMPAIGN: As the Farm Families of Mississippi (FFM) campaign enters its fifth year on the air, it is now showing in every TV market in Mississippi. FFM has also purchased spots on several shows on Mississippi Public Broadcasting, which is available statewide. Our radio spots can be heard on the SuperTalk radio and are being played on WREB in DeSoto County to reinforce that area of the state plus Memphis. Billboards can be seen across the state. More than 250 organizations, businesses, and individuals have contributed to this campaign to help tell the story of what farmers do for consumers on a daily basis. While the campaign is having a big influence on the public, we can always do more with more resources. If you would like to join the ever-expanding list of sponsors, send your tax-deductible contribution to Mississippi Farm Bureau Foundation, Attn: Angela Thompson, P.O. Box 1972, Jackson, MS 39215. You can also purchase the Farm Families of Mississippi car tag. It will cost you an extra \$31, but \$24 of that goes straight to the campaign. These can be ordered at your county tax collector's office.

MFBF ROW CROP COMMODITY COMMITTEES CONVENE FOR UPDATES: On March 7, members of the MFBF Cotton, Rice, Soybean, and Corn/Wheat/Feed Grains commodity advisory committees convened for a joint meeting in Grenada to discuss several important matters for production agriculture in Mississippi. Tim Clements, MFBF Soybean Commodity Advisory Committee member and producer serving on an industry taskforce appointed by Mississippi Ag Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, briefed fellow committee members on the latest discussions ongoing within the Mississippi Department of Agriculture concerning possible safeguards to be implemented as the new 2,4-D, and Dicamba-resistant technologies enter the market next year. MFBF Rice Commodity Advisory Committee Chair Patrick Swindoll discussed the background and status of the Mississippi Bee Stewardship Program. MFBF Corn/Wheat/Feed Grains Coordinator Britton Hatcher outlined a set of recommendations to the USDA Risk Management Agency put forth by the MFBF Crop Insurance Task Force to adjust the corn planting dates and shorten the late planting periods for crop insurance purposes. MFBF President Randy Knight discussed some concerns with recent key staff departures from the MSU MAFES & Extension Service. Finally, Dr. Keith Coble, MSU Department of Ag Economics, gave an overview of the 2014 Farm Bill.

MISSISSIPPI BEE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM: Later this month, all Mississippi row crop farmers, beekeepers, agricultural consultants, and agricultural pilots will be briefed by mail about the newly developed Mississippi Bee Stewardship Program led by an MFBF Pollinator Dialogue Group representing MFBF, Mississippi Beekeepers Association, Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association, Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association, Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council, Mississippi State University Extension Service, and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. MFBF President Randy Knight stated, "We are very pleased with the support and interest in this program from the state's farmers and beekeepers. We just held a meeting with all the organizational stakeholders to finalize the plans to roll out this effort. We have over 500 Bee Aware flags available and will have the educational brochures

ready to go in the mail very soon. We are also pleased to report that the MFBF policy resolution that pertains to this issue was adopted by the delegates at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in January. Mississippi is proud to begin this effort and hopes that EPA will view it as a positive and proactive effort of how farmers and beekeepers can work together to better protect our bee populations in local areas without a one-size-fits-all national pesticide policy.”

MFBF TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE CONVENES: In late February, the MFBF Transportation Study Committee convened its first official meeting of the year. Committee members were briefed by staff concerning the current status of the state’s failing infrastructure system, the state’s existing funding sources, and administration of revenues among MDOT, the State Aid road program, and the local system bridge replacement program. They were also given a review of measures taken by surrounding states to address failing infrastructure needs. The committee will meet again in May to begin gathering more information and evaluating numerous options to address this issue.

DELTA AREA WATER CONSERVATION MEETINGS A HUGE SUCCESS: During the months of February and March, MFBF co-hosted a series of water conservation meetings across the Delta area with the Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board. Meetings were held in the following counties: Tunica, Bolivar, Tallahatchie, Humphreys, Quitman, Sunflower, and Washington. Over 550 producers and industry representatives were in attendance. Meeting participants were briefed by Farm Bureau producer leadership concerning the status of the voluntary well metering program, by members of the Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board on water conservation research priorities and the Sustainable Irrigation Project, or SIP, and by Dr. Jason Krutz, Extension Irrigation Specialist, who showcased data collected by his research on irrigation conservation efficiencies and production systems. MFBF would like to thank the following industry partners who help support these meetings: Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board, Pioneer Hybrid, Delta Plastics, Chicot Irrigation, Circle S Irrigation, Irrigation Equipment Inc., Mid-South Water Works, Jimmy Sanders Inc., and Helena.

COUNTY FARM BUREAUS CONTINUE TO STRESS PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY METERING PROGRAM: On March 28, Sunflower County Farm Bureau issued a letter to all producers in the county to further stress the importance of their participating in the voluntary metering program put forth by the Delta Sustainable Water Resource Committee in February 2013. The letter states, “Currently, many counties in the Delta have met their 5% goal. Some have not. Sunflower County is one of the counties who are behind. Sunflower County has an estimated goal of 135 meters needed to meet the initial 5% by June 30. As of March 24, according to YMD records, Sunflower County has only installed 94 meters countywide. The Delta farming community has an opportunity to avoid mandatory metering while seeking innovative ways and solutions to reduce our water deficit. We cannot stress enough how important it is that you participate in this voluntary metering effort so that we can reach these goals.”

Voluntary Metering Report 3-31-14

	Meters Needed	Meters Installed
Bolivar	150	82
Carroll	4	2
Coahoma	59	78
DeSoto	5	2
Holmes	15	19
Humphreys	54	45
Issaquena	15	19
Leflore	80	45
Panola	10	5
Quitman	42	17
Sharkey	34	37
Sunflower	135	96
Tallahatchie	48	14
Tate	1	1
Tunica	46	38
Washington	110	129
Yazoo	20	34
Totals	828	663

MDCC TO HOLD AG PRODUCTION WORKER TRAINING: Mississippi Delta Community College is hosting an Agricultural Worker Training on May 26-June 6. The program offers 75+ hours of instruction and hands-on experience that will better prepare individuals to work on farm operations. Course information includes tractor operation, attaching implements, road transport of wide equipment, basic tractor maintenance, tool identification, GPS guidance systems overview, chemical handling, and farm safety/first aid training by the MFBF Safety Division. For more information, contact John Conrad at (662) 887-2876, extension 14.

GRAIN BIN SAFETY EFFORT ENJOYS BIG CROWDS: The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Safety Department is pleased to report the success of the 2014 Grain Bin Safety Workshops held across the state in conjunction with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety during the week of Feb. 24. Meetings were held in Yazoo City, Macon, and Greenwood and educated approximately 400 people over the three-day event. MFBF would like to thank the numerous sponsors who supported these workshops. They include Mid-Delta Metal Works, Valley View/K & D Associates, Palmer Construction, Farmers Grain Terminal, Bunge, CWS Systems, Delta Grain Services, Valley Park Elevator, Mississippi Farm Bureau Sales Department, Superior Catfish, and the Mississippi Corn Promotion Board.

GRANDIN IS CONVENTION KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Temple Grandin will address the 2014 annual membership meeting of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. Despite being diagnosed with autism as a child, Dr. Grandin has enjoyed a successful career as a livestock-handling equipment designer, one of the very few in the world. She has designed the facilities in which half the cattle are handled in the United States, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald's, Swift, and others. Dr. Grandin presently works as a professor of animal science at Colorado State University and speaks around the world on both autism and cattle handling.

MCENTIRE AND HUSBAND AT WORSHIP SERVICE: Susie McEntire and her husband, Mark, will be featured during our Worship Service at state convention. Susie is Reba's little sister and has directed her talents to the country gospel side of American roots music. Through the years, she has garnered much acclaim, winning many awards and nominations. She co-hosts "Cowboy Church TV on RFDtv and recently signed on to be a spokesperson for the Community Learning Council Inc., a nonprofit organization that focuses on education to help prevent and stop domestic violence. Mark is an adventurer, fitness expert, theologian, and presenter. The two make a great team. Mark often join on stage to sing and play a little blues guitar.

VOICES OF AGRICULTURE: The next "Voices of Agriculture" will feature a recap of the 2014 Session of the Mississippi Legislature and a story on Ag Day at the Capitol. "Voices of Agriculture" airs May 29 at 1 p.m. and May 31 at 2:30 p.m., CST, on RFD-TV. You will find RFD-TV on these channels: Channel 231 on Dish Network and Channel 345 on DirecTV.

EVENTS PROMOTE BETTER PASTURE GRASSES: On April 10 in Starkville, the Oktibbeha County Extension office will host a cool-season forage tour at the Henry H. Leveck Research Farm on the south side of the Mississippi State University campus. This evening event is free, but early registration is encouraged. Contact Julie White, Oktibbeha County Extension director, at (662) 323-5916 or juliew@ext.msstate.edu for more information or to register. On April 25 in Holly Springs, the Marshall County Extension Office will host a similar field day for North Mississippi producers. This free event takes place from 9 a.m. until noon at the North Mississippi Branch Experiment Station at 42 MAFES Circle on Highway 7 North. To register for the program and meal, contact Marshall County Extension Director Janet Jolley at (662) 252-3541 or janetj@ext.msstate.edu. Mississippi will host the Southern Pasture and Forage Crop Improvement Conference on April 21-23 at Treasure Bay Hotel and Casino in Biloxi. Preregistration is \$120 by April 16 and \$150 after that date. For a detailed agenda and more information on the meeting location, go to <http://agrilife.org/spfcic/>. For future forage events across the state, visit <http://msucare.com/crops/forages/events.html>.

PETERMAN JOINS EXTENSION AS AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATE - Mark Peterman has joined the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service as the new aquaculture associate. Peterman returned to MSU after nine years at Auburn University's School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences, where he was a member of the farm management

team. Peterman's office is located in the Oktibbeha County Extension Office in Starkville. He may be reached at (662) 323-5916 or markp@ext.msstate.edu.

NRCS WEBPAGES: The website for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, nrcs.usda.gov, has been evolving to keep pace with the needs of today's farmers. Online tools include [Web Soil Survey](#), [PLANTS database](#) and [COMET-Farm™](#). A new page was recently created called [Get Started with NRCS](#). This site helps farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners learn how they can make improvements to their land with conservation. It provides the five steps to getting assistance from NRCS so that they can know about the process of applying for assistance from the comfort of their own home. Revamped pages include [About NRCS](#) and [Drought Resources](#) as well as the newly created [Resources for Small Farms](#) page. The About NRCS page provides an overview of what NRCS offers, including those popular tools mentioned earlier that bring many visitors to the website. Drought Resources houses information on assistance and resources that can help farmers and ranchers be more resilient to drought. And finally, the Resources for Small Farms page pulls together information and resources that may be of interest to owners and managers of smaller farms, such as information on organics and seasonal high tunnels. The NRCS website enjoys about 13,000 visits per day, and some of the most popular pages deal with Soils, Web Soil Survey, and the Farm Bill.

FORD SAVINGS: Farm Bureau members can enjoy \$500 Bonus Cash savings off vehicle MSRP toward the purchase or lease of any eligible 2012/2013/2014/2015/2016 Ford vehicle or \$750 off Lincoln vehicles. With this valuable offer, you can enjoy savings on the vehicle of your choice from our exciting new lineup of hardworking and technologically advanced cars and trucks, including the Ford F-150 with its impressive power, fuel efficiency, and best-in-class trailer-towing capacity.

GREAT EDUCATIONAL WEBSITE: Here is a website that is very helpful in the conversation on GMOs with consumers. It is really good about telling the story of genetically modified organisms and the educational process. Please share this with others in your groups/organizations. The link is www.gmoanswers.com.

Calendar of Events

April 10	Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo, <i>Raleigh</i>
April 11-12	Super Bulldog Weekend, <i>MSU</i>
April 22-23	Secretaries' Conference, <i>Jackson</i>
April 25	Women's Leadership Conference, <i>Jackson</i>
May 21	Poultry Commodity Meeting
May 27	Dairy Commodity Meeting

June 10-11-12	Teacher/Volunteer Ag in the Classroom Workshops <i>Hernando, Cleveland, Hattiesburg</i>
June 12	Beef Commodity Meeting
June 19	Forestry Commodity Meeting
July 9	Cotton Commodity Meeting, <i>Grenada</i>
July 10	Horticulture/Apiculture Commodity Meeting, <i>Jackson</i>
July 11	Sweet Potato Commodity Meeting
July 17	Peanut Commodity Meeting
Oct. 2-3	Women's Ag Tour, <i>Delta</i>

If you have information for the June issue of Grassroots Leader newsletter, please contact Region 1 Regional Manager Justin Ferguson at (601)720-4238 or jferguson@msfb.org or Glynda Phillips at (601) 540-6868 or gphillips@msfb.org.