

GRASSROOTS LEADER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2014

MCCORMICK TO SERVE AS MFBF PRESIDENT: Mike McCormick, a 52-year-old Jefferson County cow-calf and timber farmer, has been elected to serve as the 10th president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau® Federation (MFBF). The election was held earlier this week at the organization's 93rd annual membership meeting in Jackson. Mike raises cattle and grows timber on a 1,200-acre farm near Union Church that has been in his family since the 1820s. He primarily runs a cow/calf operation with some stockers and hay. Mike has served for seven years as president of Jefferson County Farm Bureau. He has been a member of the MFBF Board of Directors for four years and has served for five years on the national Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. He is a former chair of the MFBF Beef and Forestry advisory committees and a former member of the American Farm Bureau Federation Beef and Forestry advisory committees. Mike is a founding member of the Farm Families of Mississippi ag promotion campaign and served as vice chair of the committee. He currently serves on the MFBF Land Use Committee. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Mike's wife, Suezan, teaches in the Louisiana State University School of Dentistry and is a longtime vice chair of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau Women's Committee. "I have a passion for Farm Bureau," Mike said. "As a lifelong farmer who comes from a long line of family farmers, I know how important our 92-year-old organization is to agriculture. I intend to work with our staff and membership to build upon our past successes and ensure that Farm Bureau continues to successfully address the needs of all Mississippi farmers. I am humbled by your support and encouragement, and I look forward to meeting each and every one of you in the days ahead."

OTHER ELECTIONS: The three regional vice presidents were re-elected during state convention activities. They include: North Mississippi – Donald Gant of Merigold; Central Mississippi – Ted Kendall IV of Bolton; and South Mississippi – Reggie Magee of Mt. Olive. Newly elected or re-elected directors include Kevin Simpson, Ashland; Bob Workman, Sledge; Dan Bishop, Baldwin; Craig Canull, Caledonia; Dott Arthur, Carthage; Paul Myrick, Stringer, James Newman, Rolling Fork; Earl Gay Edwards, Smithdale; Dorothy Cole, Richton; and Ron Daniels, Gulfport. Young Farmers & Ranchers State Committee Chair Kelly Davidson of Sunflower County and State Women's Committee Chair Betty Mills of Montgomery County also serve on the state board. Re-elected district women's chairs include: District 1 – Deniese Swindoll of DeSoto County; District 3 – Peggy McKey of Hinds County; District 5 – Betty Edwards of Amite County; and District 7 – Carolyn Turner of Jones County.

OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAMS: Outstanding county Farm Bureau programs in each region include: Region 1 – DeSoto County; Region 2 – Calhoun County; Region 3 – Montgomery County; Region 4 – Monroe County; Region 5 – Simpson County; Region 6 – Jefferson Davis County; Region 7 – Marion County; and Region 8 – Jackson County. Jackson County Farm Bureau received the President’s Award as the best overall county program in the state.

JACKSON CITED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE: Dr. Gary Jackson, director of the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service, was presented the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service Award for 2014. Dr. Jackson has served as director of the MSU Extension Service for four years. During that time, he has initiated a process of reorganization and strategic planning to reconnect the Extension Service to citizens across the state of Mississippi. Mississippi farmers have always depended on Extension to help them do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Farmers will continue to rely on Extension in the years to come as our world population continues to grow. The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor Farm Bureau bestows on an individual, and it is reserved for someone who has truly made a difference in the lives of Mississippi farmers.

MALLETTE RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP: The late Conrad Mallette of Vancleave was honored with the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation’s 2014 Excellence in Leadership Award. The presentation was made to his family during the organization’s annual membership meeting. Over the course of his lifetime, Conrad worked tirelessly to promote agricultural and industrial growth in Mississippi and Jackson County while helping Jackson County Farm Bureau become financially strong and the proud owner of two office buildings. A third office has opened in Ocean Springs in recent months. Conrad served on the Jackson County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 25 years and as board president for 16 years. He also served several terms on the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors. The Excellence in Leadership Award was established to recognize those Farm Bureau volunteer leaders who have made a significant contribution to Farm Bureau and agriculture in Mississippi. Their contributions have been performed as a result of an unselfish effort to strengthen Farm Bureau and to enhance rural life in Mississippi.

MARK LEGGETT RECEIVES AG AMBASSADOR AWARD: Mark Leggett, president of the Mississippi Poultry Association (MPA), is the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Ag Ambassador Award recipient for 2014. Through the years, MPA has worked with Farm Bureau and other groups to form powerful coalitions to successfully work for not only the poultry industry but state agriculture as a whole. MPA has also proven to be tireless in its efforts to get the farmer’s story before the consuming public. The organization has been one of the biggest supporters of the Farm Families of Mississippi ag promotion campaign and has been helpful in getting some of the major poultry companies to be a part of the program as well. The Ag

Ambassador Award recognizes individuals who have gone beyond their normal range of activities in promoting Mississippi agriculture, and it isn't presented every year – only when Farm Bureau feels that it has been earned.

FARM WOMAN OF THE YEAR: Carla Taylor, a Prentiss County dairy farmer, has been named Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Farm Woman of the Year. The MFBF Farm Woman of the Year Award was established to recognize, encourage, and reward the achievements of women farmers. The recipient personifies the highest level of professional excellence in agriculture. Carla serves as women's chair for Prentiss County Farm Bureau and has also served on the Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) State Committee and the MFBF Board of Directors. She participated in the American Farm Bureau Federation Women's Communications Boot Camp in Washington, D.C., and was a regional YF&R Achievement Award winner in 2013. She and her husband, Bradley, operate Taylor Jersey Farm near Boonville with Bradley's parents. They have three sons, Lee, 7, Carl, 5, and Holden, 4.

STATE YF&R ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Dairy farmers Jeremy and Beth Graham of Thaxton in Pontotoc County were named state winners of the 2014 Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Achievement Award. They were recognized for their farming innovations, leadership skills, and involvement in Farm Bureau and their community. In January, the Grahams will compete for the national title at the 2015 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. As state winners, the Grahams received a new Ford pickup truck, the use of John Deere and Kubota tractors, \$500 from Watson Quality Ford, and \$1,800 toward the purchase of technology from Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. Regional winners in this competition received \$500 from Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company and \$500 from Southern Ag Credit. Beth is a radiology technologist. The Grahams have two daughters, Mary Hatley, 4, and Kendall, 1.

STATE YF&R EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE AWARD: Marie Rogers of Guntown was named state winner of the 2014 Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award. She was recognized for her involvement in agriculture, her leadership ability, and her involvement and participation in Farm Bureau and her community. An Itawamba County Extension Agent with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, Marie serves as the resource person on the Itawamba County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and is active in Young Farmers & Ranchers activities on the county and state levels. She and her husband, Joe, have a cow/calf and row crop operation. The Rogers have two children. As state winner, Marie received a zero-turn lawnmower, sponsored by Southern Ag Credit, and an expense-paid trip from Farm Bureau to the 2015 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. Regional winners in this competition received an iPad from Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company and a Yeti cooler from the Mississippi Farm Bureau Insurance Sales Department. The Excellence in Agriculture Award

is presented to those individuals or couples who do not have the majority of their income subject to normal production risk.

FARM BUREAU AMBASSADOR: Emma Jumper of Oktibbeha County was selected as Farm Bureau Ambassador for 2014. She will serve as a spokesperson for Farm Bureau and agriculture during the coming year. A student at Mississippi State University, Emma received a \$4,000 scholarship. The contest is sponsored annually by the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Women's Program.

GARY CHIT TOM/ J.K. SIMPSON AWARDS: The Gary Chittom Membership Award went to Bolivar County Farm Bureau (less than 1750 members category) and to Madison County Farm Bureau (1750 members and above category). The winner of the J. K. Simpson Memorial Award is Madison County Farm Bureau.

BLANKENSHIP SAFETY AWARD: Winners of this year's Mike Blankenship Outstanding County Safety Award are Calhoun County Farm Bureau and Union County Farm Bureau in North Mississippi, Rankin County Farm Bureau in Central Mississippi, and Simpson County Farm Bureau in South Mississippi. The award is in memory of longtime Farm Bureau Safety Director Mike Blankenship and is presented to the counties that have had the most safety programs taught by Farm Bureau safety educators during the past year.

OUTSTANDING WOMEN'S PROGRAMS: Outstanding county Farm Bureau women's programs in each district include: District 1 – Bolivar County, Lil Gant, chair; District 2 – Union County, Mary Manning, chair, and Shirley White, vice chair; District 3 – Scott County, Anita Webb, chair; District 4 – Montgomery County, Georgia Caffey, chair; District 5 – Lawrence County, Dori Lowe, chair, and Barbara Lowe, vice chair; District 6 – Neshoba County, Joan Thompson, chair, and Marlo Beason, vice chair; District 7 – Stone County, Louise Brown, chair, and Jane Brewer, vice chair; and District 8 – Holmes County, Nancy Spell, chair, and Betsy Padgett, vice chair.

Counties receiving the Women's Outstanding Achievement Awards for 2014 include:

•**Information, Organization, and Government Relations** – Covington County - Shelby Williams, chair, and Phyllis Moulds, vice chair

•**Agriculture in the Classroom** – DeSoto County - Deniese Swindoll, chair, and Carolyn Neergaard, vice chair

•**Community Service** – Sunflower County - Helen Allison, chair

•**Youth Safety Volunteer** – Leake County - Dian Grundy, chair, and Dott Arthur, vice chair

STATE YF&R DISCUSSION MEET WINNER – Dr. Gaea Hock of Starkville won the state Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet contest. She received a 4-wheeler from Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, \$500 from Southern Ag Credit and \$500 from Watson Quality Ford. YF&R Discussion Meet finalists received \$350 from Southern Ag Credit. Gaea is an assistant professor with Agricultural Information Science and Education at Mississippi State University. She will compete nationally at the 2015 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at San Diego, California, in January.

AGRICULTURE DISPLAY CONTEST: The recipient of the 2014 Agriculture Display Award is Oktibbeha County. Other quarterly winners this past year include Humphreys, Leflore, and Montgomery counties. This contest was established to reward county Farm Bureaus for the hard work and dedication they put forth to educate people in their communities about Mississippi agriculture and Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. One winner is honored per quarter for an exceptional agricultural display exhibited in their county Farm Bureau office.

KELLY DAVIDSON TO LEAD YF&R STATE COMMITTEE: Prior to state convention, Kelly Davidson of Sunflower County was elected by his peers to chair the 2015 Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) State Committee. The 29-year-old Ruleville rice and soybean farmer will also serve as the young farmer representative on the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors. Kelly and his wife, Brooke, have one child, Rudy Parks, 4.

FRIEND OF FARM BUREAU: U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, Congressman Gregg Harper, District 3, and Congressman Steven Palazzo, District 4, were each presented the Friend of Farm Bureau Award for their outstanding work in the 113th Congress. The Friend of Farm Bureau Award is given at the end of each Congress to members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate who were nominated by their respective state Farm Bureaus and approved by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Board of Directors.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE: Mississippi will receive an American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Award of Excellence in five program areas in 2014. These include: Education and Outreach, Member Services, Public Relations and Communications, Policy Development and Implementation, and Leadership Development. Each year, all 50 state Farm Bureaus compete in the AFBF Awards of Excellence competition. The contest judges each state in several categories and rewards them if they reach certain predetermined goals. The results are announced during the Recognition and Awards Program at the AFBF annual membership meeting, which will be held this year in San Diego, California.

2015 MFBF WINTER COMMODITY CONFERENCE: Make plans to attend the 2015 Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Winter Commodity Conference set for Jan. 26-27 at the MFBF Building in Jackson. Speakers for the first day (Forestry and Land/Livestock and Aquaculture) will include Dr. James Henderson, Associate Extension Professor, Forestry; Stan

Ingram, Attorney at Law with Biggs, Ingram, and Solop, PPL; Jim Rob, Livestock Marketing Information Center; Kristy Boswell, American Farm Bureau Federation; and Jim Wiesemeyer, Informa Economics Senior Vice President. MFBF Public Policy Director Samantha Newman will present a legislative update. Speakers for the second day of activities (Row Crops and Apiculture) will include Wiesemeyer; Dr. Michael Swanson, Wells Fargo Bank Ag Economist and Senior Vice President; and Dr. Pat Westhoff, Director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri-Columbia. For more information, contact Nancy Britt at (601) 977-4230

GRAIN BIN SAFETY PROGRAM PLANS TAKING SHAPE: The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Safety Department has announced preliminary plans to conduct another round of grain bin safety programs in February 2015. MFBF Senior Safety Specialist John Hubbard stated, “We are making tentative plans to conduct a two-day training seminar in partnership with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety in Peosta, Iowa. We are looking at Marshall County on Feb. 25 and Tunica County on Feb. 26 due to several grain bin incidents that have happened in those areas. As usual, we will have classes during the day for farmers and farm labor and evening classes for first responders. We will also be reaching out to Tennessee and Arkansas to invite producers and first responders from those areas to participate in this specialized training. We have seen the benefits of this program over the last several years through several farm testimonials. It’s definitely making an impact, and we look forward to another successful series of meetings this year.”

REPORT WATER USE DATA BY FEB. 1: Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and other members of the Delta Sustainable Water Resource Taskforce remind producers who installed flow meters through the voluntary metering program to report their annual water use data to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) by Feb. 1, 2015. Letters have been sent to all program participants reminding them of this key provision in the voluntary metering program. All applicable forms needed to complete the report are attached to the letter.

MFBF YF&R LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: The annual Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Leadership Conference will be held Jan. 23-25 at Mississippi State University in Starkville. For more information, contact your regional manager or YF&R Coordinator Kirsten Johnson at (601) 977-4277 or kjohnson@msfb.org.

2015 WASHINGTON D.C. FLY-IN PLANS ANNOUNCED: The MFBF Public Policy Department has announced that the 2015 Washington D.C. Fly-In Visit will be held Feb. 23-25. You may contact your regional manager or county Farm Bureau office for more information.

PURCHASE FARM FAMILIES OF MISSISSIPPI VANITY CAR TAG: Show your support for the Farm Families of Mississippi agricultural image campaign by purchasing a Farm Families of Mississippi vanity car tag. The additional tag fee is \$31 in addition to your annual tag

fee. The campaign receives \$24 of these funds to better promote agriculture to the general public. Over 1,500 tags have been sold to date. Please visit your local tax collector's office to order the tag.

FARM BILL LEARNING SESSIONS: Sessions about “Agricultural Risk Coverage,” “Price Loss Coverage,” “Supplemental Coverage Option,” “Stacked Income Protection Plan,” and “Farm Risk Management” will be held in the following areas: Coastal Plains Research & Extension Center in Newton on Dec. 11 from 9 a.m. to noon.; Lightered Knot Community Center in Wiggins on Dec. 17 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Pontotoc County Extension Office in Pontotoc on Dec. 18 from 9 a.m. to noon; and Bost Extension Building, Mississippi State University, on Dec. 19 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact John Michael Riley, Extension Ag Economist, at (662) 325-7986 or j.m.riley@msstate.edu.

DELTA AG EXPO: The 42nd Annual Delta Agricultural Exposition will be held Jan. 21-22 at the Bolivar County Expo Center in Cleveland. The expo will feature a keynote speaker and over 100 agriculture-related exhibits. Show hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday and from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Thursday. Admission is free. Contact expo chair Craig Hankins, Bolivar County Extension Service, at (662) 843-8361 or craigh@ext.msstate.edu.

MEMBER DISCOUNT ON CASE IH EQUIPMENT: Farm Bureau members have an opportunity to receive up to \$500 off eligible tractors and equipment from Case IH. The following products are eligible for this benefit: Farmall Compact tractors (A & B) - \$300 per unit; Farmall Utilities C, U, & J series - \$500 per unit; Maxxum Series and Farmall 100A series - \$500 per unit; self-propelled windrowers - \$500 per unit; large square balers - \$500 per unit; round balers - \$300 per unit; small square balers - \$300 per unit; disc mower conditioners - \$300 per unit; sickle mower conditioners - \$300 per unit; and Case IH Scout - \$300 per unit. Simply go to www.fbverify.com/case and follow the prompts for the Case IH offer. Members enter their Farm Bureau membership ID and zip code and click “submit.” A prompt to print a personalized certificate will appear. Members should take the certificate to their dealer with a current driver's license or state identification. The discount is stackable, meaning it can be used with other discounts, promotions, rebates, or offers that may be provided by Case IH or a Case IH dealership. For assistance or for more information, contact Member Benefits Coordinator Dedra Luke at (601) 977-4169.

NEW FARM BUREAU APP FOR SMARTPHONES: A new app for your smartphone will give you quick access to Farm Bureau information, including member benefits, programs, events, and more. You can pay your dues, watch the latest videos from Farm Bureau, link to our social media sites, find directions to your county Farm Bureau office, read the latest Farm Country magazine, even send us photos! Versions are available for Apple and Android phones. Go to the App Store or the Android Store and search for Mississippi Farm Bureau.

COLORING CONTEST: Each year as part of the Ag in the Classroom program, second-graders are encouraged to color a farm scene and win a prize. Regional winners receive \$25, and the state winner is awarded \$50. This year's deadline for regional entries is Feb. 15, and the deadline for state entries is March 15. Contact your county Farm Bureau office or the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Women's Program at (601) 977-4854 for more details.

AG ART CONTEST: The Mississippi Farm Bureau Ag Art Contest offers Farm Bureau Women, through the Ag in the Classroom program, an opportunity to increase students' awareness of the importance of agriculture in Mississippi. Titles of the contests this year are "Down on the Farm" for grades 1-6 and "Barns, Bins, and Gins" for grades 7-12. Six winners from the two age divisions will receive \$75 each. A state winner from each of the two divisions will receive \$100 each. Entries should be submitted to Mississippi Farm Bureau by the March 1 deadline. Previous state winners are not eligible.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM: The deadline for submitting a Teacher of the Year essay is March 15. The winning teacher will have an opportunity to take an expense-paid trip to the National Ag in the Classroom Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, and will participate in the annual Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Women's Leadership Conference in Jackson. For more information, contact your county Farm Bureau office or the MFBF Women's Program at (601) 977-4854.

VOICES OF AGRICULTURE: The next "Voices of Agriculture" will feature highlights from the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and American Farm Bureau Federation annual meetings. "Voices of Agriculture" airs Feb. 9 at 1 p.m. and Feb. 14 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. "Voices of Agriculture" is a production of Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

2015 SECRETARIES' CONFERENCE: Make plans to attend the 2015 Secretaries' Conference set for April 21-22 at Table 100 in Flowood. For more information, contact Merlene Partridge at (601) 977-4233.

NEW COOKBOOK: A new cookbook, entitled "Country Cooking, Volume V," will be available in most county offices after convention. The cost is \$20. If you order a cookbook from the state office, you will pay \$20 plus postage. For more information, contact Pam Jones at pjones@msfb.org or (601) 977-4854.

AG MAGS AVAILABLE: Farm Bureau offers a children's agricultural newsletter called Ag Mag, which features one Mississippi commodity each issue through facts, activities, games, and more. You can order copies of this newsletter for your local classroom or ag promotion events from our Ag in the Classroom program. Dairy, corn, poultry, horticulture, and cotton editions are now available for purchase. The cost is \$5 for 20 copies. To order, contact Pam Jones at pjones@msfb.org or (601) 977-4854.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM T-SHIRTS FOR SALE: If you have not purchased your Ag in the Classroom T-shirt, contact Pam Jones at pjones@msfb.org or (601) 977-4854. The shirts are available in maroon or red, sizes Youth, small through large, and Adult, small through 2XL. The cost is \$15 for short sleeves and \$20 for long sleeves. We also have fans for sale, using the same design as the T-shirt. They are 50 cents each. If you buy in bulk, you get a cut. For example, you can purchase 25 fans for \$10.

Calendar of Events

- Jan. 6 Mississippi Legislature Convenes

- Jan. 11-14 AFBF Annual Meeting
 San Diego, California

- Jan. 23-25 MFBF YF&R Leadership Conference
 MSU

- Jan. 26-27 Winter Commodity Conference
 Jackson

- Jan. 26 Legislative Reception

- Feb. 23-25 Washington D.C. Fly-In Visit

If you have information for the February 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.