

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION

GRASSROOTS LEADER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2014

HOUSE PASSES FARM BILL: On Wednesday, Jan. 29, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2642, the Agricultural Act of 2014. The legislation includes major spending reforms, including an expanded crop insurance program that will ensure that farmers have protection against catastrophic losses beyond their control. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate, which has twice passed the Farm Bill with overwhelming bipartisan support. “Our farmers need this bill passed so they can make arrangements to get their crops in the ground this spring,” said Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President Randy Knight. “Without a Farm Bill, ag lenders are reluctant to issue production loans to farmers because of the great risk of a weather-related crop failure and no safety net in place. This bill provides that safety net.” Knight said he is pleased that all four of Mississippi’s U.S. House members supported the Farm Bill. “Representatives Nunnelee, Harper, Thompson, and Palazzo have shown great bipartisan support for our state’s farmers, and Farm Bureau appreciates their efforts to help bring this important piece of legislation to the finish line,” he said.

AFBF STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN/CONVENTION RECAP: Following the delegate session of the American Farm Bureau Federation's 95th Annual Convention, the organization's board of directors met to set AFBF's strategic action plan to address public policy issues for 2014. The board-approved plan includes focusing the organization's attention on the following key issues: agricultural labor reform, support for renewable fuels, support for biotechnology, protecting farmers' interests in regard to new technology systems and data compilation, opposition to expanded federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act, and protecting farmer and rancher interests regarding fiscal policy and tax reform issues. In other convention news, Bob Stallman was re-elected to serve as AFBF president for an eighth two-year term. Barry Bushue of Oregon was re-elected to a third two-year term as AFBF vice president. Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President Randy Knight was re-elected to serve another term representing the Southern Region on the AFBF Board of Directors. Brandi Karisch of Oktibbeha County, state winner of the 2013 Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Discussion Meet, competed in the Sweet Sixteen semifinals nationally. Brandy is an Extension beef cattle specialist at Mississippi State University. These Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation program areas received an AFBF Award of Excellence: Education and Outreach, Member Services, Public Relations and Communications, and Leadership Development. Next year’s meeting will be held in San Diego, California.

BLOODWORTH IS GENERAL COUNSEL: Kent M. Bloodworth will serve as general counsel for the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF). He succeeds Sam Scott, who has retired after many years of service to Farm Bureau. Kent, who previously served as MFBF assistant general counsel, is a graduate of Mississippi State University, with a bachelor's degree in agronomy and a master's degree in weed science. He received his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Mississippi College School of Law. For the six years prior to his work with Farm Bureau, Kent used his agricultural background as an associate attorney with Husch Blackwell LLP in St. Louis, Missouri.

GRAIN BIN SAFETY WORKSHOPS: Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation is partnering with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety to host a series of grain bin safety and rescue training workshops on Feb. 25-27. Workshops targeting farmers and employees will begin each day with lunch at 11:30 a.m. The program will be held from 12:30- 2:30 p.m. This program is designed to teach farmers and their employees the preliminary steps to take if someone is trapped in a grain bin until emergency personnel arrive. Workshops for emergency responders will begin at 6 p.m. This program is designed to teach firefighters and emergency personnel how to extricate victims trapped inside a grain bin. Space is limited, and turnout gear is required.

Here are the dates and locations for the workshops:

February 25

Yazoo County
National Guard Armory
2201 Gordon Ave.
Yazoo City, MS

February 26

Noxubee County
Triple J Equipment
4777 Prairie Point Rd.
Macon, MS

February 27

Leflore County
Agri Center
1304 Cypress Ave.
Greenwood, MS

For more information or to register, please contact Angela Thompson at athompson@msfb.org or call (601) 977-4242 or 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4242.

DELTA VOLUNTARY GROUNDWATER METERING PROGRAM: A number of producers across the Mississippi Delta have agreed to participate in a voluntary groundwater metering program that will provide a greater understanding of the alluvial aquifer and help guide efforts to protect and restore our groundwater resources. The goal of the voluntary metering program is to have 5 percent of the irrigation wells in each county metered and reporting by June 30, 2014, and 10 percent of the wells metered and reporting by December 31, 2015. If these goals are not met, a mandatory metering program will begin, with 10 percent of each producer's wells metered and an additional 10 percent of each producer's wells requiring meters the following year. If you haven't joined this proactive, voluntary effort to avoid a mandatory metering program, we urge you to do so. Thanks for your support.

PROPANE AND THE COLD WEATHER: On January 23, 2014, the Mississippi Insurance Department issued Bulletin No. 2014-1 to address propane delivery and distribution challenges resulting from the recent extremely cold weather conditions. The bulletin states that "propane gas

is available, however, there are distribution problems preventing delivery. Specifically, United Propane Gas, also known as Delta Propane and Pearl River Propane, is unable to service all of its customers.” Under the Emergency Bulletin, the following procedural waivers are effective immediately: *(1) Mississippi Department of Insurance Regulation 2011-2, Handling of Liquefied Compressed Gas Containers, Section 4.A, is hereby waived so that any UPG Propane Gas customer with a UPG Release may request another dealer to fill their tank(s); (2) Mississippi Department of Insurance Bulletin 2010-4, Leak Checks, Paragraph I, is hereby waived so that Leak Checks are not required upon “first time service” of UPG commercial customers only. All other leak check requirements remain in place. All other legal and procedural requirements remain in place. Companies are expected to observe all safety rules and regulations to ensure that no unsafe situation is allowed to exist. Price gouging will not be tolerated. This waiver only applies to UPG commercial customers who request a release from UPG and service from another dealer.*” The emergency bulletin continues through Feb. 11, 2014, unless renewed or modified.

MISSISSIPPI BEE STEWARDSHIP PLAN: On Monday, Jan.27, leaders from the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF), the Mississippi Beekeepers Association, the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association, the Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and the Mississippi State University Extension Service convened to discuss a draft of the “Mississippi Bee Stewardship Program,” which includes a suggested set of cooperative standards for a good working relationship between beekeepers and farmers. MFBF President Randy Knight stated, “From our initial meeting of this group in September, I asked our staff and MSU Extension Service personnel to develop a short document that contains a set of “best management practices” that farmers and beekeepers can both agree to in hopes of better protecting our bee population. The core component of the entire program is enhanced communication among all parties. I am pleased to report that all groups at the table have agreed to these core components. We will be developing promotional materials and communication efforts with our state’s beekeepers and row crop producers in this important effort. Special thanks to Dr. Jeff Harris and Dr. Angus Catchot at Mississippi State University for their help in this effort.”

FARM FAMILIES OF MISSISSIPPI 2014 CAMPAIGN: The Farm Families of Mississippi Ag Image Campaign is set to begin its fifth season in late February. The campaign will run in every TV media market in Mississippi this spring. Adams County farmer Noble Guedon, who chairs the Communications Committee for 2014, says teaching the public about the benefits of agriculture is the foundation of the Farm Families of Mississippi effort. “We have to let the ordinary consumer know what the farmer provides for them on a daily basis, and that’s what this campaign is all about,” he said. “Without agriculture, nothing else matters.” The 2014 campaign will run until mid-May in all seven TV markets, plus the Mississippi Public Broadcasting Network and SuperTalk Mississippi, the statewide news/talk radio network. If you’d like to

become a sponsor or help in some other way with the campaign, contact Justin Ferguson at (601)720-4238 or Greg Gibson at (601) 573-4154.

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.

WOMEN'S DAY AT THE CAPITOL & FOOD CHECK-OUT DAY: State Women's Committee members and others will serve refreshments in the rotunda of the Capitol and visit with Senate and House agriculture committee leaders during Women's Day at the Capitol on Feb. 18. Afterwards, cash donations, food, and household items will be delivered to Ronald McDonald House of Jackson as part of the Food Check-Out Day celebration. For more information, contact Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245.

YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS CONFERENCE: The annual Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference is set for Feb. 21-23 in Vicksburg. Workshop topics include farm succession planning, updates from the Farm Service Agency, how to better engage your elected officials, and wild hog issues and control. Women's tours of Vicksburg will be available Saturday morning. Attendees will also be touring Anderson Tully on Saturday. Sunday will include a guided tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park. For more information, contact your MFBF regional manager or Kirsten Johnson at (601) 977-4277 or kjohnson@msfb.org.

2014 LANDOWNER WORKSHOP: A workshop designed to help landowners learn about generating supplemental income from their property will be held Feb. 25 at the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Building in Jackson. The workshop is sponsored by MFBF, Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, MSU Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and Watson Family Foundation. It is presented by the MSU Natural Resource Enterprises program. For more information, call (662) 325-3133 or visit <http://wildlifeworkshop.msstate.edu/register.asp>. You may also call MFBF Land Program Director Doug Ervin at (601) 624-1705.

AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL: Ag Day at the Capitol will be held March 4. This annual event gives Farm Bureau volunteer leaders an opportunity to meet with lawmakers and express their appreciation for the work these men and women do on behalf of agriculture each legislative session. Colorful and informative exhibits will be displayed in the rotunda. Last year's event enjoyed a great turnout. For more information, contact Tammy Meyer at (601) 977-4226.

COLORING CONTEST DEADLINE: 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 1. The regional deadline for the Ag Art Contest is March 1. Contact your county Farm Bureau office or the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Women's Program at (601) 977-4245 for more details.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR DEADLINE: 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 Hershey, Pennsylvania, 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) 977-4245.

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. This is an educational event and a great benefit to both beef and poultry producers. Approximately 400 producers attend annually.

2014 SECRETARIES' CONFERENCE: Make plans to attend the 2014 Secretaries' Conference to be held 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 Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (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 MFBF Women's Program Coordinator Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245.

VOICES OF AGRICULTURE: The next "Voices of Agriculture" will visit the 2013 Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award finalists and winner. "Voices of Agriculture" airs March 27 at 1 p.m. and March 29 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.

FARMtastic at DIXIE NATIONAL: An interactive, educational event aimed at teaching third-graders about the importance of agriculture comes to the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo Feb. 7-8. FARMtastic, which offers hands-on exhibits that help children learn the role of agriculture in the production of food and other products used in daily life, will be set up in the Mississippi Trade Mart at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds. The event is open to preregistered school groups on Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is open to the public on Feb. 7 from 1 to 3 p.m.

and on Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. FARMtastic, which began in 2012, was created by the Oktibbeha County Farm Bureau and MSU Oktibbeha County Extension Service. For more information, call Julie White at (662) 323-5916 or Theresa Hand at (601) 372-1424.

CENTRAL MS PRODUCER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING: The Central Mississippi Producer Advisory Council Meeting will be held Feb. 18 at the McKenzie Arena in Raymond. Deadline for preregistration is Feb. 13 by 5 p.m. On-site registration begins at 8 a.m. the day of the meeting. The meeting will end at 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided. The McKenzie Arena is located at 1178 Seven Springs Road in Raymond behind the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center. For more information or to register, visit http://msucare.com/cmrec/crpac_register/index.html or call (601) 857-2284.

NORTH MISSISSIPPI PRODUCER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING: Mississippi State University's North Mississippi Research and Extension Center will host its annual Producer Advisory Council Meeting Feb. 20 at the Magnolia Conference Center in Verona. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. The program starts at 9 a.m. and runs until about 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration is encouraged. For information or to register, call (662) 566-2201.

COASTAL COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING: Experts from the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station will be available to discuss current issues, share research results, and answer questions at the annual Commodity Advisory Council Meeting Feb. 25 at the Coastal Research and Extension Center. Deadline for preregistration is Feb. 15. On-site registration begins at 9 a.m., and the meeting will end at 2:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. The Coastal Research and Extension Center is located at 1815 Poppo's Ferry Road in Biloxi. For more information or to register, call (228) 388-4710.

THE WAY WE WORKED: What would life be like without farmers, teachers, doctors, or firefighters? From Jan. 12 to Feb. 18, the Union County Heritage Museum in New Albany, in cooperation with the Mississippi Humanities Council, will explore the professions and the people that sustain American society when it hosts "The Way We Worked," a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition. New Albany and Union County have been expressly chosen, along with five other Mississippi sites, to host this exhibit as part of the Museum on Main Street project, a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. Call the museum at (662) 538-0014 for more information or go to the website at www.uchheritagemuseum.com.

MSU VETERINARY COLLEGE OPEN HOUSE: The Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine invites visitors of all ages to attend its 29th annual Open House on April 4 and 5. The college will open its doors each day from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. for the free event at the Wise Center in Starkville. The April 4 program is for pre-registered school groups only. The April 5 program is open to anyone in the community. Organizers encourage teachers to register school groups as soon as possible. To register, call Brandi Van Ormer at (662) 325-0465. Open

House highlights include a petting zoo, animal shows, microchip scanning demonstrations, animal hospital and classroom tours, and veterinary displays and demonstrations. Older children often enjoy talking with veterinary students and learning more about careers in veterinary medicine. For more information, contact Van Ormer or visit <http://www.cvm.msstate.edu>.

EXTENSION BLUEBERRY WORKSHOP: An educational workshop for blueberry growers will be held Feb. 13 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Forrest County Extension Office at 952 Sullivan Drive in Hattiesburg. Registration is \$10 per person and due before Feb. 6. Pre-registration forms and an agenda are available online at <http://msfruitextension.wordpress.com/2014/01/22/agenda-for-the-2014-blueberry-workshop>. Gulf South Blueberry Growers will co-host the event. For more information, contact Eric Stafne at (601) 403-8939 or estafne@ext.msstate.edu.

4-H PAGES NEEDED: The 2014 Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves 4-H Senate Page Program is seeking qualified young people to serve as pages for one week, March 31 to April 4, in the Mississippi Senate. Applicants must be 4-H members in high school between the ages of 14 and 19 as of Jan. 1. They must have at least a B average in their classes. Mailed applications must be postmarked no later than Feb. 24, and emailed applications must be received by 5 p.m. that day. Forms are available at county Extension offices. For information, contact Terence Norwood, an Extension instructor with the Center for Government and Community Development, at (601) 857-2284 or tnorwood@ext.msstate.edu.

BIOLOGIST CREATES GLOWING PLANTS: Glowing plants, as seen in the seemingly fantastical flora of the 2009 film “Avatar,” are no longer just a special effect. Molecular biologist Alexander Krichevsky of the St. Louis-based biotech company Bioglow has developed the Starlight Avatar, a genetically modified tobacco plant that glows in the dark, as a first step toward a world in which one day our highways and homes might be illuminated not with electricity but with the luminescent glow of plant life. “There are no naturally occurring glowing/bioluminescent plants in nature,” Krichevsky wrote in an email. “While there are a number of glowing species – fireflies, glowworms, glowing fish, etc. – there are no glowing plants. Starlight Avatar is the first one.”

WEARABLE COMPUTERS: A wearable computer, described as “a smartphone for your face,” has the potential to help row crop farmers operate more efficiently and profitably, according to Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station researchers at Auburn University. They base their optimism on their experience testing a yet-to-be-released device called Google Glass in cotton fields at Auburn’s E.V. Smith Research Center. The device is a pair of glasses with a tiny computer mounted just above the right eye. Researchers say such wearable technology could make row crop farming more mobile, efficient, profitable, and environmentally sustainable and also could help producers capitalize on the growing volume of farm data generated by precision farming equipment. In addition, the visual, textual, and other data uploaded on the go via Google Glass will be available for future reference and also can be shared on a real-time basis,

better enabling farmers to make spot decisions in the field. Google has said Glass will be commercially available in 2014, but the corporation has not indicated what the price tag will be.

– *Reprinted from the December 2013 issue of AGIllustrated, a publication of Auburn University College of Agriculture.*

MOST BEAT-UP DAIRY BOOT CONTEST: U.S. dairy farmers are invited to enter photos of their foulest footwear at winquatroboots.com. Winners of the “Most Beat-Up Dairy Boot” contest, sponsored by Quatro Boots, receive 10 free pairs of boots, while the runners-up will each receive one free pair. Entries must be received online by Feb. 28. Four runners-up and the grand prize winner will be chosen based on votes cast on the Quatro Boots’ Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/quatroboots>.

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

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| Feb. 10-12 | Washington D.C. Fly-In Visit |
| Feb. 15 | Coloring Contest Regional Deadline |
| Feb. 18 | Women’s Day at the Capitol & Food Check-Out Day, <i>Jackson</i> |
| Feb. 21-23 | MFBF YF&R Leadership Conference, <i>Vicksburg</i> |
| Feb. 25 | Landowner Workshop, <i>Jackson</i> |
| Feb. 25-27 | Grain Bin Workshops, <i>Yazoo City, Macon, Greenwood</i> |
| March 1 | Ag Art Regional Deadline |
| March 4 | Ag Day at the Capitol, <i>Jackson</i> |
| March 15 | Teacher of Year Deadline |
| March 25 | National Agriculture Day |
| April 10 | Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo, <i>Raleigh</i> |
| April 11-13 | Super Bulldog Weekend, <i>MSU</i> |
| April 22-23 | Secretaries’ Conference, <i>Jackson</i> |
| April 25 | Women’s Leadership Conference, <i>Jackson</i> |

If you have information for the April 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.