

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION

GRASSROOTS LEADER NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2013

MFBF ANNUAL MEETING: The 92nd annual membership meeting of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation will be held Dec. 7-9 at the Hilton Jackson hotel in Jackson. You will find a schedule of convention activities in the November/December 2013 issue of Mississippi Farm Country magazine. Make plans to attend a special meet-and-greet reception with convention keynote speaker, Baxter Black, Saturday morning from 10 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. Also, make plans to attend the Saturday night Farm Families of Mississippi Benefit Dinner. The dinner, which begins at 6 p.m., will feature a special program by Black. Patrick Henry Hughes is the special speaker and musician for the Sunday morning worship service. The convention closes following the annual business session, which gets underway Monday morning at 8 a.m. Convention coverage will run in the January/February and March/April 2014 issues of our membership magazine.

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU STATEMENT ON FARM BILL PROGRESS: On Thursday, Oct. 24, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation issued the following press statement: Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) commends Senator Thad Cochran's leadership on the Farm Bill conference committee, and we are excited to see progress being made on the Farm Bill. Our farmers and ranchers need a dependable safety net in order to continue to provide the safest, most affordable food in the world. MFBF President Randy Knight said, "We support the efforts of Senator Cochran to bring all sides together and work in a bipartisan manner to complete the Farm Bill. It has been a bumpy road, but we could not have gotten this far without his steadfast leadership and knowledge."

MDEQ ANNOUNCES WATER METER INSTALLATION TRAINING FOR NOV. 5: An MDEQ-sponsored training program on meter installation will be held Nov. 5 at 9:30 a.m. in the Capps building in Stoneville. Paul Rodrigue, NRCS, will lead the session. Producers and landowners interested in installing flow meters on irrigation wells are encouraged to attend. The training may also be viewed through a live simulcast at some MSU Extension Service offices in Delta counties. These counties include Bolivar, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Washington, and Yazoo. If you would like to view the event remotely, you should contact that specific county office in advance.

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU WEIGHS IN WITH FARM BILL CONFEREES ON MEANS TESTING PROVISIONS: On Oct. 15, the American Farm Bureau® Federation filed a letter to all members of the newly-appointed conference committee between the Senate and House of Representatives to work out final details on Farm Bill

legislation. Segments of the letter are outlined here. Farm Bureau has a long history of opposing means testing of farm program benefits, regardless of the program in question. These kinds of arbitrary tests are just that, arbitrary limits placed on productive farmers and ranchers, who are often among the most innovative and progressive producers in agriculture. Adjusting these structures as Congress continually revises the limits just adds meaningless cost factors and undermines sound farm management. In addition, penalizing farmers' and ranchers' productivity often works at cross purposes to the underlying policy goal and can drive producers into financial structures that only make sense in the context of one means test or another. Two policy areas in particular where the imposition of means testing works at cross policy purposes are in conservation and crop insurance ... The limitation or penalty on crop insurance included in the Senate language is particularly troublesome. Applying a substantial penalty (the equivalent of nearly a 40 percent increase in producer premium costs) to producers who are over the \$750,000 Adjusted Gross Income limit may well induce these producers to drop out of the program. Taking this premium income out of the total pool may well boost the overall average risk associated with the remaining participants. This will lead to higher premiums and an increase in the cost per unit for both the remaining program participants and the federal government.

FARMTASTIC EXPERIENCE AWAITS VISITORS: An agricultural event targeting third-graders will take place at Mississippi State University (MSU) on Nov. 5-9. FARMtastic is an educational program designed to help children learn the sources of their food, clothing, and other products. They also will learn about wildlife and health issues. Oktibbeha County Extension Agent Julie White is coordinating the second annual event, which is sponsored by the MSU Extension Service and the Oktibbeha County Farm Bureau in cooperation with other agencies. Weekday activities begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 1 p.m. at the Mississippi Horse Park, located on Poorhouse Road. "FARMtastic is a hands-on agriculture education activity that promotes locally produced agricultural products in a fun learning environment for area third-graders," Julie said. She is expecting almost 1,000 children from Oktibbeha and the surrounding counties. School groups will visit the exhibits the first four days, and the general public is invited to attend from 9 a.m. until noon the final day, which is a Saturday. For more information about this event, call the Oktibbeha County Extension Office at (662) 323-5916.

FARM BUREAU PLEASED WITH PASSAGE OF HOUSE WATER RESOURCE BILL: On Thursday, Oct. 24, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation issued the following press statement: Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation is extremely pleased the House passed H.R. 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2013. Mississippi is strategically located between the Mississippi River, Tombigbee River, and the Gulf of Mexico. The entire state, but especially farmers and ranchers, will benefit from the passage of WRRDA. MFBF President Randy Knight said, "Mississippi will continue to benefit from having a reliable waterway system that is linked to competitive ports. Waterway systems are vital to moving agriculture commodities domestically and internationally. We are pleased that our entire congressional delegation voted in favor of this legislation. We would like to thank Congressman Thompson, Congressman Harper, Congressman Palazzo, and Congressman Nunnelee

for showing good bipartisan work on a much-needed piece of legislation. Working to overcome gridlock is exactly what farmers and ranchers need in their delegation.”

AG LENDER WORKSHOPS A SUCCESS: During the month of October, a series of ag lender workshops were held across the state to brief agricultural lenders on potential changes in upcoming farm legislation in Congress. Sponsors of the meetings were the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and the Agricultural Economics Department at Mississippi State University. Seminars were held in Batesville, Jackson, and Hattiesburg. Hunter Taylor, loan officer with Mississippi Land Bank, stated, “I attended the workshop in Batesville. The meeting was extremely informative and very helpful in helping me understand the potential changes in the new Farm Bill. As an agricultural lender, this information is crucial as we work with our customers to better understand the new farm safety net and how it will impact the farm credit environment.”

MS FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS CONFERENCE: The 2013 Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association (MFVGA) Conference and Trade Show will be held in Choctaw at Pearl River Resort's Silver Star Conference Center on Nov. 13-15. The conference will start with a golf tournament on Wednesday, Nov. 13, and the meetings and trade show will begin on Thursday, Nov. 14. The Mississippi Agritourism Association will be meeting in conjunction with the MFVGA. For more information, go to www.msfruitandveg.com.

NEW STATE CONSERVATIONIST SELECTED FOR MISSISSIPPI: The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the selection of Kurt Readus as the new state conservationist for Mississippi. He began his tenure on Sept. 22, 2013. Readus started his career with the NRCS in 1998 as a student trainee, working in the states of Arizona and Alabama. In 2000, he became a soil conservationist in Avondale, Arizona, and was promoted in 2005 to a district conservationist. In 2007, he accepted the position of area conservationist for Central Mississippi, where he provided leadership and guidance to 21 field offices, in addition to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Field Office. He served as the assistant state conservationist-programs in Mississippi from January 2011 to September 2013. Throughout his career, he has served on details to national headquarters in Washington, D.C., with the National Conservation Stewardship Team and has served as the acting deputy state conservationist of California. He is married to Dr. Fonda L. Readus and enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He says he truly believes in fulfilling the mission of NRCS, “Helping People Help the Land.”

U.S. FARM-RAISED CATFISH HEALTHY CHOICE: An article on LIVESTRONG.com recently touted the many benefits of catfish as part of a healthy diet, citing studies conducted by the USDA and two professional studies published in medical journals. The LIVESTRONG article noted that catfish's high protein and low fat and calorie count allow families to pair the fish with several healthy side dishes. Eating catfish also boosts your body's intake of heart-healthy amino acids. In addition, it is noted that a single serving of catfish provides a whopping 40 percent of an adult's daily intake of vitamin B-12, which helps the body convert food into energy. U.S. Farm-Raised

Catfish is also very low in mercury, which means it is safe for consumption by women who are pregnant. For the full article, please visit www.livestrong.com/article/445658-health-benefits-of-catfish/.

MSU HORSES FOR SALE IN FIRST ONLINE AUCTION: Mississippi State University (MSU) is moving a popular horse sale into cyberspace with a special online auction. More than 20 horses from the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station's (MAFES) herd will be sold from Nov. 1 to 21 at <http://www.auction.msucares.com>. Buyers can also bid on the stud fee for one 2014 breeding to gray American quarter horse stallion, UGA King of Aces. Prospective buyers can view photos, videos, and registration papers on the individual Web page for each horse up for bid. Prospective buyers can set an appointment to view horses in person at the MAFES Horse Unit by contacting Ryann Campbell at rs640@msstate.edu or (918)917-0735. All but one of the MAFES horses are registered or are eligible for registration. American quarter horses, thoroughbreds, one breeding stock American paint horse, and one grade Welsh Pony stallion will be for sale. For example, Lot 5 is a 2-year-old gray mare out of a National Cutting Horse Association money-earning mare. She has had at least 60 days of riding and is considered a performance prospect. MAFES, the MSU Extension Service, and the MSU Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences are collaborating to conduct the sale.

MOBILE PRESS REGISTER OP-ED SUPPORTS FORESTRY INDUSTRY: The following article written by Sen. Trip Pittman was posted in the Mobile Press Register on October 13, 2013. Sen. Trip Pittman represents District 32 in the Alabama Senate and has been a staunch supporter of the Alabama timber industry in helping it rebound. During the recent recession, no one industry has been affected more than the forest products sector in the South. The housing market crashed during the Great Recession from a national high of 1.7 million starts in 2006 to a low of 400,000 in 2007. In recent months, the housing market has started to show signs of recovery. In recent times, we have seen governments adopt green building standards to encourage eco-friendly stewardship in the construction of new buildings. However, many of the new regulations demand that the forest products used in building have to be from certified timberlands. Many of today's timber producers across the South voluntarily certify their land to document their sustainable practices. The predominant certification for landowners in Mississippi and Alabama is to be certified by the American Tree Farm System and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The bad news is that as the green building standards have evolved the federal government has utilized a standard developed by the U.S. Green Building Council called LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED only accepts the Forestry Stewardship Council certification system. This would exclude the use of most forest products from Mississippi and Alabama. There are hundreds of public projects going on across the South at this moment that because they seek LEED recognition preclude Mississippi- and Alabama-produced forest products from being used. Sen. Pittman has been vocal and active to protect the Alabama timber industry from being excluded. Mississippians need to be aware of the challenges that are on the horizon.

MSU DEER LAB LAUNCHES FOOD PLOT PLANTING APP: Wildlife managers can get expert tips on what to plant in food plots year-round with a new app from the

Mississippi State University (MSU) Deer Lab. Bronson Strickland, a wildlife management specialist with the MSU Extension Service, said he wanted to give people easy access to research-based information while in the field or in the feed store looking at seed. For more information about the app and for additional research-based information on managing white-tailed deer, visit the MSU Deer Lab website at <http://www.msudeer.com>.

VOICES OF AGRICULTURE: The next “Voices of Agriculture” will feature stories on the new Farm Families of Mississippi ag display at the Mississippi Agricultural and Aviation Museum in Jackson, county Farm Bureau ag promotions, and the new egg vaccination research at Mississippi State University plus our Meet a Farmer and cooking segments. “Voices of Agriculture” airs Nov. 27 at 5:30 p.m. and Nov. 30 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.

2014 WASHINGTON D.C. FLY-IN VISIT: The 2014 Washington D.C. Member Fly-In Visit is scheduled for Feb. 10-12. This event takes Farm Bureau members to Washington, D.C., to visit with elected officials. If you would like to participate in the fly-in, please contact your MFBF regional manager for more information.

GOOD U.S. MEAT EXPORT DEMAND SHOULD HELP CORN PRICES: As corn harvest across the U.S. hits about 50 percent completion, reports that U.S. meat exports remain strong should help support corn prices that are always under pressure as combines roll. The demand for U.S. beef and pork isn’t the main driver for corn prices, which saw December 2013 futures close at about \$4.40 per bushel. But that demand has possibly provided help in keeping future prices from dipping below \$4 as quickly as some had anticipated. The latest export numbers show strength for the beef and pork industries, which consume billions of bushels of U.S. corn every year. The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) reported that beef exports are up 1 percent in volume, at 767,017 metric tons, and 10 percent in value, at \$4.01 billion, heading into fall. For the full article written by Larry Stalcup, please visit www.cornandsoybeandigest.com.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM T-SHIRTS FOR SALE: If you have not purchased your Ag in the Classroom T-shirt, call Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245 or Pam Jones at (601) 977-4854. You may also email Pam at pjones@msfb.org. 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. The shirts will also be sold at the General Store at state convention.

WHO GREW MY SOUP: The Agricultural Book of the Year is “Who Grew My Soup?” by Tom Darbyshire, with imagery by artist C.F. Payne. The book and a free teaching unit are available for \$6 plus \$2 postage. Make your check out to Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and mail it to: Ag in the Classroom, P. O. Box 1972, Jackson, MS 39215. For more information, call Clara Bilbo at (601) 977-4245 or Pam Jones at (601) 977-4854. You may also email Pam at pjones@msfb.org. The book will also be sold at the General Store at state convention. “Who Grew My Soup?” was underwritten by the Campbell’s Soup Company.

FIRST ANNUAL ANTIQUE DAYS: The First Annual Antique Days will be held Nov. 23, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., near the Triangle Cultural Center in Yazoo City. The event will feature demonstrations of syrup making and how things were made on a farm with a forge years ago. Hit and Miss engines will also be on display. The event will have Yazoo Farmers Market vendors, arts and crafts exhibitors, and food vendors. For more information, call (662) 590-5415.

Calendar of Events

- Nov. 14 State Resolutions Meeting, Jackson
- Dec. 2-4 MSU Row Crop Short Course, MSU
- Dec. 4-6 USA Rice Outlook Conference, St. Louis
- Dec. 7-9 MFBF Annual Meeting, Jackson
- Jan. 7 Legislative Session Convenes at Noon
- Jan. 12-15 AFBF Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas
- Jan. 22-23 Delta Ag Expo, Cleveland
- Jan. 27-28 Winter Commodity Conference, Jackson
- Jan. 27 Legislative Reception
- Feb. 8-12 AFBF YF&R Conference, Phoenix, Arizona
- Feb. 10-12 Washington D.C. Fly-In Visit
- Feb. 18 Women's Day at the Capitol &
 Food Check-Out Day, Jackson
- Feb. 21-23 State YF&R Leadership Conference, Vicksburg
- March 4 Ag Day at the Capitol, Jackson

Grassroots Leader is a monthly e-newsletter for Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation volunteer leaders. If you have information for the December issue, 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.