

GRASSROOTS LEADER

A Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Volunteer Leader Newsletter

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Land Program will assist property owners

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Board of Directors voted recently to create a Land Program designed to address issues faced by Mississippi property owners. Doug Ervin was appointed coordinator of the program. Ervin is also coordinator of the federation's Commodity and Regional Managers programs.

The board's action comes after recommendations were made by Adams, Stone and Walthall County Farm Bureaus as well as an MFBF Land Program Study Committee that such a program be formed. The study committee had been appointed earlier in the year to examine the feasibility of a Land Program.

Ervin, who worked closely with the committee, says he is looking forward to meeting and working with property owners across the state.

"Issues impacting property owners run the gamut from mineral rights, recreational uses, agrotourism, private property rights and taxes to legislative issues such as farm laws, eminent domain and farm preservation," he said. "This new program will give Farm Bureau the necessary resources to ensure that our members are treated fairly in all arenas."

For more information, contact Ervin at 601-977-4230 or, toll free, at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4230.

MFBF Policy Development Meetings

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Regional Policy Development meetings have been scheduled as follows: Region 1, Sept. 27; Region 2, Aug. 16; Region 3, Sept. 6; Region 4, Aug. 14 and Aug. 27; Region 5, Aug. 13; Region 6, Aug. 23; Region 7, Aug. 28 and Region 8, Aug. 21.

For more information, call Nancy Britt at 601-977-4230.

Board Tours MAFES Facilities

In July, members of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors and their spouses toured Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES) research facilities in South Mississippi.

The group visited the Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi and branch stations, including South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville; White Sands Research Unit; and McNeill Research Unit. Participants learned about research work with Formosan termite control and cattle and horticulture production. The group also visited the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune.

Many thanks to Dr. Patricia Knight, head of the Coastal Research and Extension Center, and her staff, and to MAFES Director Dr. Vance Watson and MAFES Associate Director Dr. Reuben Moore for their help with the tour.

MSU Extension Cotton Specialist Named

Darrin Dodds has been named the state's new cotton specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Dodds will serve as the primary contact for Extension educational material, technology transfer and programming regarding production of cotton, said Michael Collins, head of MSU's Department of Plant and Soil Sciences.

"Darrin will provide statewide program leadership that assists, supports and strengthens the work of other specialists, scientists, county agents and producers," Collins said. "He will work closely with industry to facilitate technology transfer and adoption of best cotton management practices."

A native of Illinois, Dodds received a master's degree in weed science from Purdue University. He is in the final stages of completing a doctoral degree in the same field at MSU.

Despite rust scare, early dry weather, soybeans look good

Experts are predicting good soybean yields this year despite dry weather at the beginning of the season and a mid-summer soybean rust scare.

Scouts with the Mississippi State University Extension Service found Asian soybean rust on kudzu in Mississippi July 12 in Wilkinson County. At presstime, no soybean rust had been found on soybeans in any field in Mississippi.

“We found rust in two spots of kudzu between Woodville and Fort Adams. It ranged from light to heavy, depending on where you were in the kudzu,” said Billy Moore, Extension plant pathologist emeritus and head of the soybean rust scouting team. “We have not found it yet on soybeans.”

The most recent spray advisory recommends spraying soybeans from Warren County south along the river. This is in response to rust finds in soybeans in Louisiana that are pretty serious outbreaks.

Soybean rust was found in kudzu and soybean fields in Louisiana, both production and sentinel plots. Sentinel plots were planted very early to provide an early warning of rust's presence.

For the most recent updates, call the SOYBEAN RUST HOTLINE at 1-866-641-1847.

Video Receives Recognition

A video produced by Greg Gibson received an Honorable Mention in the 2007 American Farm Bureau Federation Public Relations Awards Contest.

Greg's video, shown at the 2006 National Ag in the Classroom Conference, was a “thank-you” to Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom (AITC) volunteers and staff around the nation for all that they had done for the schools on the Gulf Coast after Katrina. It looked at the damage sustained by the schools and the efforts by Farm Bureau members across the nation to provide items for the schools.

Greg is the federation's Public Relations/Multimedia Coordinator. He also produces “Agri-View: A Look Around Mississippi Agriculture,” the federation's television program that appears on RFD-TV.

Signup Resumes for Emergency Forestry Conservation Program

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns recently announced that signup for the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve

Program resumes Aug. 6, 2007. The program helps landowners and operators restore and enhance the approximately 5.6 million acres of forestland damaged by the hurricanes of 2005.

“Almost two years after the devastating 2005 hurricane season, some forests are still in need of restoration,” Johanns said. “By extending the signup period for the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program, USDA will help landowners reestablish stands of trees to prevent further degradation of the land as well as improve wildlife habitat, water and air quality.”

Local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices will accept offers for enrollment in the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program from producers Aug. 6 through Dec. 31, 2007.

A fact sheet with additional program information is available by visiting a local FSA Service Center or online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>. Click on Disaster Assistance. News releases are also available on this Web site.

Annual Women's Leadership Conference

The annual Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Women's Leadership Conference is scheduled to be held Oct. 12-13 at Lake Tiak O'Khata at Louisville.

More detailed information will run in the next issue of this newsletter. Contact MFBF Women's Program Coordinator Clara Bilbo at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4245.

Mississippi Horticulture

Travel the state and you will see Mississippians outside working in their yards and gardens. Dine in their homes and you will quite often be served fresh fruits and vegetables. Supporting our love of gardening and fresh produce is Mississippi's horticulture industry, an important segment of state agriculture.

The Sept./Oct. 2007 issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine will spotlight state horticulture, which basically consists of two segments: commercial fruit and vegetable production and the green industry. The green industry includes ornamental greenhouse production, nursery production and landscape service.

In 2002, Mississippi horticulture contributed almost \$1 billion to the state's economy. Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to the industry in 2005, but it is slowly recovering.

Read about Mississippi horticulture in the upcoming Sept./Oct. 2007 issue of our magazine.

Gateway Tire and Service Center

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and Gateway Tire and Service Center have teamed up to offer Mississippi Farm Bureau members a 10 percent discount on tires and service.

This discount does not apply to other promotions. You must present your Mississippi Farm Bureau membership card to receive this discount.

For more information, call Dedra Luke at 601-977-4169 or 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4169.

Mossy Oak & Nevada Bob's Golf

Mississippi Farm Bureau members can take advantage of a 10 percent discount on products through Mossy Oak's online store. This discount does not apply to promotional or sale items.

Through Nevada Bob's Golf, MFBF members can receive 10 percent off all accessories and apparel, excluding golf balls, and 5 percent off all hard goods such as irons, drivers, fairway wedges and putters – excluding Ping and Callaway.

See store for details. Not valid with any other offer. Offer valid at Jackson, Mississippi, store.

Dove field management

Knowledge of how to plant and manage a legal dove field in Mississippi can put hunters ahead of the game as mourning dove season approaches.

Two Dove Field Demonstrations and Wildlife Field Days will be held in August. The first is set for Mississippi State University's (MSU) Pontotoc Ridge-Flatwoods Experiment Station on Aug. 11 and the second will take place at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Newton on Aug. 18.

Sponsored by the MSU Extension Service, MSU's Natural Resource Enterprise program, and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the field days, which will take place from 8 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. at each event, will be held on actively managed sites.

For further information about these events or to register, please contact your local county Extension office or visit the Natural Resource Enterprise program on the Web at <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu/events/index.html>

Mississippi Rice Checkoff benefits state producers

Most people may not realize the important research that takes place through producer-assessed checkoff programs, especially research that benefits the Mississippi rice producer. As a matter of fact, for every bushel of rice produced in the state for commercial sale, there is a small, three-cent deduction held by the purchaser at the first point of sale. This small deduction funds the vast activities of the Mississippi Rice Promotion Program, also known as the Mississippi Rice Checkoff Program.

The Mississippi Rice Promotion Program is overseen by a board of twelve rice growers sponsored by the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Delta Council, and the Mississippi Rice Council and selected by the governor. The Mississippi Rice Promotion Board administers and oversees checkoff dollars that are spent to promote the growth and development

of the rice industry in Mississippi by research, advertisement, promotions, education, and market development.

One of the most important areas of work under the umbrella of the Mississippi Rice Promotion Board involves applied research that benefits the grower by increasing yield, reducing disease, providing better weed control methods, and reducing input costs. According to a recent report from Mississippi State University on rice production inputs, fuel costs now are \$57.60 more per acre when compared to 2000 and fertilizer costs are now \$38.72 more per acre when compared to 2000.

See the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* for more information about the Mississippi Rice Checkoff Program. Or visit: www.msstate.edu/dept/drec/rice/rice_research.htm

ATV Discounts Available to Farm Bureau Members

The following ATV discounts are now available to Farm Bureau members only:

- **Got Gear ATV of Ridgeland**—\$500 discount on ATVs, motorcycles and 4-wheel utility vehicles
- **Greenville Motorsports**—Receive up to \$750 in free accessories or a \$500 discount coupon
- **Hattiesburg Cycles**—\$750 in free accessories or a \$500 discount coupon
- **Oxford Outdoors**—\$500 discount off MSRP on the purchase of ATVs, utility vehicles and motorcycles.
- **Powersports Plus**—10% discount coupon

Discounts apply to ATVs 400 cc or greater and motorcycles 800 cc or greater.

OTHER EXCLUSIONS APPLY. You must have a coupon. To receive a coupon or additional information, call Dedra Luke at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4169, or call 601-977-4169.

Agri-View Schedule

Mississippi's corn crop exploded this year. On the next *Agri-View: A Look Around Mississippi*, learn about the corn industry and about some unusual aspects of corn.

This program will air Sept. 26 at 5:30 p.m. on RFD-TV. You can get the program on Channel 9409 on Dish Network and on Channel 379 on DirecTV.

Agri-View is a production of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation

Mississippi's Horse Industry

Mississippi State University agricultural economists find that the Mississippi horse industry has an economic impact of over a billion dollars. In 2003, economists reported Mississippi had 75,000 horses. Preliminary data for a similar

study reviewing numbers for 2006 finds an increase in horse numbers of over 40,000 horses.

Almost half of the horses are registered quarter horses. The Mississippi Quarter Horse Association is a strong component to the economic impact of the horse industry as the association is responsible for putting on the third largest quarter horse show in the nation, the Quarter Horse Dixie Nationals, and the Region 9 American Quarter Horse Show. Both shows are multi-day shows held at the Mississippi Fairgrounds in Jackson and are responsible for bringing in numerous exhibitors from all over the United States.

The Tennessee Walking Horse is also a vital component to the Mississippi horse industry as Mississippi ranks fourth in the nation for the number of registered Tennessee Walking Horses.

For more information about the state's horse industry, see the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine.

McCurdy is named Ag Ambassador

Meredith McCurdy of Panola County has been selected a National Collegiate Ag Ambassador for 2007-2008. She is one of 20 ag ambassadors chosen from across the nation by the National FFA program.

McCurdy is a former Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) summer intern and was first runner-up in the Miss Farm

Bureau-Mississippi Contest for two consecutive years. She is a past MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Scholarship recipient and also received the MFBF Berta Lee White Scholarship.

McCurdy has served as state FFA president and as Panola County Miss Hospitality. She is majoring in communication and agriculture at Mississippi State University.

Remember to Vote

The 2007 Elections Calendar looks like this: **Primary Election** – Tuesday, Aug. 7; **Primary Runoff Election** – Tuesday, Aug. 28; and **General Election** – Tuesday, Nov. 6.



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