

## AFBF Delegates Urge Swift Enactment of New Farm Bill

Delegates at the 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Farm Bureau Federation in New Orleans, Louisiana, unanimously approved a delegate body resolution in favor of swift enactment of a new, comprehensive farm bill that maintains an adequate safety net for farmers and ranchers.

Delegates expressed opposition to a one- or two-year extension of the current law because it fails to provide meaningful, longterm certainty.

Delegates also reaffirmed support for comprehensive immigration reform that will improve farmers' timely access to legal farm workers.

Regarding international trade, delegates reaffirmed existing policy on the importance of opening new markets and expanding existing markets for U.S. farm products. They also voted to strengthen the organization's position that the Clean Water Act does not override the rights of states in regulating water.

The annual meeting involved deliberations by 368 voting delegates representing every state and commodity. The policy approved at the annual meeting will guide AFBF's legislative and regulatory efforts throughout 2008.

## Waide Re-elected to AFBF Board

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President David Waide was re-elected to represent the Southern Region on the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Board of Directors. He is one of seven board members from that region.

Bob Stallman was re-elected AFBF president and Barry Bushue, a nursery and berry producer from Oregon, was elected AFBF vice president.

Stallman, a cattle and rice producer from Columbus, Texas, will serve his fifth two-year term. Bushue will succeed Steve

Appel, a wheat and barley producer from Dusty, Washington, who retired.

Townsend Kyser of Alabama was elected the new chair of the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Committee, which also makes him a member of the AFBF Board of Directors.

Terry Gilbert of Kentucky continues to serve as chair of the AFBF Women's Leadership Committee and on the AFBF Board of Directors.

## Programs Receive Award of Excellence Recognition

Two Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation programs – Member Services and Public Relations/Information – received Awards of Excellence during American Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting activities in New Orleans.

The Award of Excellence recognizes outstanding programs serving Farm Bureau members during the previous year.

## Collins, Loop Earn Distinguished Service Awards

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) gave its highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, to former Agriculture Department Chief Economist Keith Collins and to Carl Loop, a former AFBF vice president and long-time president of the Florida Farm Bureau.

The awards were announced during the opening general session of the AFBF annual meeting.

For more convention information, see the upcoming March/April 2008 issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine.

# Calendar of Events

Feb. 6	Food Check-Out Day
Feb. 11-13	Washington, D.C. Trip
March 4	Day at the Capitol Jackson
March 16-22	National Ag Week
March 20	National Ag Day
April 10	Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo Smith County Ag Complex Raleigh
April 25-28	National Women's Leadership Conference Louisville, Kentucky

## Mississippi Peanuts

The face of Mississippi agriculture changed with the 2002 Farm Bill. This act removed the quota system of peanut production and replaced it with a commodity title similar to other crops. This gave farmers the opportunity to plant peanuts, and plant peanuts they did.

Acreage in 2002 in George County was about 400 acres. In 2003, acreage went up to 4,000 acres. A similar trend occurred over the next four years with 2007 hovering around 18,000 acres.

The trend in the price received for peanuts had been flat for four years, with prices ranging from \$355/ton to \$425/ton, but 2007 saw an increase to near \$500/ton. This seems to be a significant increase for profit potential, but as we all know, input costs have skyrocketed during this same period of time.

When asked about the future of George County peanut expansion, Mike Steede, County Extension Director, said, "We will probably see an increase in acreage in the 10-20% range in our area."

For more information on state peanuts, see the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine.

## Chittom Award Recipients

Issaquena County Farm Bureau and Union County Farm Bureau were recently named recipients of the Gary Chittom Award.

Issaquena County won in the category of 1750 or less members and Union County won in the category of 1750 or more members.

## Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo

The fifth annual Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo will take place April 10<sup>th</sup> at the Smith County Ag Complex in Raleigh.

This year's event will showcase a trade show that is expected to be bigger and better than ever. In addition, four educational seminars will be held for beef and poultry producers.

Seminar speakers will include Jeremy Newberry, Aqua Tech Pro, Inc., who will discuss water quality and the importance of good flock performance, and Dr. Jody Purswell, USDA Animal Research Center in Starkville, who will show producers how to increase wind speed and properly ventilate poultry houses.

Twigg Mortson, a beef cattle specialist at Kansas State University, will lead a discussion on shrink and its impact on the cattle industry. Dr. Mortson will explain to producers what shrink is and how to manage it. This will be a live cattle demonstration that will simulate market conditions.

Benny Hutchins, Southwest Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development, will deliver the final presentation on becoming more energy efficient. This will benefit homeowners and poultry producers.

## A Well-Traveled Duck ...

Here is a recent news release from the Natural Resources Conservation Service:

On Jan. 3, 2008, Freddie Scott of LaGrange, Georgia, harvested an extraordinary duck on his lease near Ruleville, Mississippi. The duck was a banded Northern Pintail drake. While any banded duck is special, the band on this particular duck read, "kankyocho-Tokyo Japan-10A75422."

Scott began to research the duck's origin. He contacted Jeffrey Lee, a Wildlife Biologist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Pearl, MS, to request help in his search for the truth. Lee contacted several professional waterfowl biologists, including Dr. Paul Padding and Terry Liddick of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Bird Banding Laboratory. Dr. Padding and Mr. Liddick indicated that the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology Bird Migration Research Center in Konoyama, Japan, was actively banding birds and might have some information to offer.

Despite the language barrier, an email was sent to the Japanese Bird Migration Research Center with the band information from the Ruleville pintail. In less than 24 hours, the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology Bird Migration Research Center confirmed that the Northern Pintail killed in Ruleville, MS, was, indeed, banded near Niigata, Japan, on Feb. 16, 2000.

The duck was captured and banded by Ryuhei Honma, a member of the Japanese Bird Banding Association, on Hyoko Lake, which is located near the northwestern coast of Japan. At the time the bird was banded, it was estimated to be at least eight years old.

Keiko Yoshiyasu, an employee of the Japanese Bird Migration Research Center, stated that band recovery data for pintails banded in Japan had been returned from the United States before, but only from Alaska, Washington, California, Oregon and Utah. Utah was the farthest east any pintail banded in Japan had ever been reported, until Scott reported his band.

This is the first ever reported pintail that was banded in Japan and harvested in the Mississippi flyway. And if you are

wondering, the distance from Niigata, Japan, to Ruleville, MS, is approximately 6,700 miles.

## “Saddle Up” Tag Now Available

Tax collectors from Alcorn County to Hancock County are busy selling Mississippi’s “equine appreciation” license plate. Legislation authorizing the new vehicle license plate passed in 2007.

The tag, called the “Saddle Up” tag, costs \$31, in addition to your normal vehicle ad valorem taxes. Proceeds from the “Saddle Up” tag will go to the Mississippi Equine Association for the promotion of the equine industry in Mississippi and for scholarships.

More information is available at (601) 759-1560.

## Workshop for Value-Added Producer Grant, Renewable Energy Loans and Grant

A training workshop will be held on Feb. 12 to introduce participants to the Value-Added Producer Grant and the Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Improvements loans and grant programs offered by USDA Rural Development. The meeting will be held at the Farm Bureau Building in Jackson.

The published Notice of Funding Availability will be reviewed as will eligibility criteria, application procedures and scoring issues. Registration begins at 9 a.m., and the meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m.

The annual Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA) for the 2008 funding cycle was published on Jan. 29, 2008, for the Value-Added Producer Grant. Applications are being accepted until March 31, 2008.

The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) has not been published for the 9006 Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Improvements loan and grant program; however, applications are currently being accepted.

Value-added producer grants may be used for planning activities and for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

The 9006 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Improvements loan and grants can be used by rural small businesses or agricultural producers to install energy efficiency equipment and/or renewable energy equipment.

For more information about the workshop, contact Kenneth C. Randle, Cooperative Specialist, at 1-662-312-9540, or G. Gary Jones, Rural Business Specialist, at 601-965-5457. E-mail addresses are [Kenneth.randle@ms.usda.gov](mailto:Kenneth.randle@ms.usda.gov) or [george.jones@ms.usda.gov](mailto:george.jones@ms.usda.gov).

The website for the value-added producer grants is <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>.

The instructions for the 9006 Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Improvements loan and grant program can be found at Rural Development Instruction 4280-B.

## Agri-View to Change Its Name

Farm Bureau’s bi-monthly TV show is changing its name from “Agri-view” to “Farm Bureau’s Voices of Agriculture.”

Eleven state Farm Bureaus produce shows to fill the timeslot of RFD-TV, and all eleven have different names and styles. This change by all the shows is an effort to give these shows the same opening, music and graphics to help the audience feel like they are watching the same show each week, not eleven different shows.

Mississippi Farm Bureau will complete its third full year of producing this program for RFD-TV with our next show, which premieres on March 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. The program will visit the farms of the finalists for the 2007 Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award.

## Mid-South Farm & Gin Show Set

The South’s largest indoor farm show – The Mid-South Farm & Gin Show – is scheduled to take place Feb. 29 through March 1 at the Memphis Cook Convention Center.

More than 400 exhibitors from 48 states and five foreign countries will occupy over 200,000 square feet of exhibit space in the convention center. Show attendees will see a greater number of farm equipment manufacturers, specialized services, the latest in seed varieties, and new technologies in precision farming software and services.

For additional information, contact Timothy Price, executive vice president of the Southern Cotton Ginners Association and Show Manager, at 901-947-3104. Or visit the website: [www.southerncottonginners.org](http://www.southerncottonginners.org)

## Egg Industry in Mississippi

Most folks are aware that poultry is our state’s top agricultural commodity. But did you know that Mississippi’s egg industry contributes substantially to the state’s economy as well?

Mississippi commercial laying hens produce an estimated 1.5 billion eggs annually. The total farm value of production of commercial eggs is approximately \$160,000,000. A laying hen produces between 230 and 250 eggs per year on average.

The corporate headquarters for Cal-Maine Foods, Inc., the world’s largest company involved in the production, cleaning, grading, packaging and sale of fresh shell eggs, is located in Hinds County. Cal-Maine employs more than 1,400 people. The company maintains facilities in 15 states and markets 683 million dozen eggs per year. These eggs are produced by some 23 million laying hens, predominantly Single Comb White Leghorns, the favorite breed for production of table eggs in the U.S.

For more information on our state’s egg industry, see the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine.

## Our Environment . . .

**Recycling** - Delta Plastics recently released its year-end polytubing recovery figures. In 2007, Delta Plastics collected a total of 57,330,575 pounds of polytubing in the five-state area of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas. Mississippi counties accounted for 13,542,700 pounds of the five-state total.

When not collected or taken to a landfill, polytubing is often burned or buried, creating environmental concerns for the farmer as well as surrounding communities.

If you, or any of the farms in your area, are in need of polytubing collection/cleanup or would like more information on the agricultural polytubing collection program, please call Dean Stone, Polytubing Collection, at (800) 277-9172 or cell: (870) 830-3845.

**Agritourism** - More and more family farms are providing unique, educational, family-oriented opportunities in addition to typical farm activities. The number one risk associated with non-traditional fee-based agricultural activities is insurance or the right type of insurance.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) will host a Special Events Liability Insurance meeting on Saturday, Feb. 9, 2008, at 1 p.m. at the Mississippi Farmer's Market in Jackson, located just off High Street on the Fairgrounds.

The MDAC does not offer any insurance, nor does it make any recommendation on insurance from any particular agency. The meeting gives those interested in agritourism activities a chance to listen to what participating Special Events Liability Insurance providers have to offer.

There is no charge for this meeting, but for accommodation purposes, please call Gary Bridges, Agritourism Director, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, at (662) 728-2429. Send faxes to (662) 728-2479 or send email to [GaryB@mdac.state.ms.us](mailto:GaryB@mdac.state.ms.us)

**Renewable Energy** - The Seventh Annual Southern BioProducts and Renewable Energy (SBP&RE) Conference will be held April 14-15 at the Silver Star Hotel and Casino Conference Center in Choctaw, Mississippi. This year's conference theme is *Building on the Strengths of Mississippi's Biomass Resources*.

Hosted by the Mississippi Biomass Council, this is one of the longest-running conferences in the Southeast dedicated to the issues and technologies surrounding biomass utilization. Please look for more information regarding the 2008 SBP&RE Conference coming soon.

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MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION  
P. O. Box 1972  
Jackson, MS 39215-1972



