

GRASSROOTS LEADER

A Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Volunteer Leader Newsletter

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October 2007

86th Annual Meeting will be Nov. 29-Dec. 1

Make plans to attend the 86th Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation to be held Thursday, Nov. 29, through Saturday, Dec. 1, at the Hilton Hotel in Jackson. Highlights include:

- **Thursday, Nov. 29** – County Recognition Program; Environmental Conference; Safety Conference
- **Friday, Nov. 30** – Women's Recognition Breakfast and Business Session; Farm Bureau Issues Conference; Talent and Miss Farm Bureau-Mississippi contests; General Session, featuring a Keynote Speaker and State Discussion Meet Finals
- **Saturday, Dec. 1** – Business Session

The Friend of Agriculture, Ag Ambassador, Excellence in Leadership and Distinguished Service awards will be presented Thursday afternoon during the County Recognition Program. The new Miss Farm Bureau-Mississippi will be crowned Friday afternoon; and the State Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet and Achievement Award winners will be announced Friday night during General Session.

As always, the General Store and Young Farmers and Ranchers live and silent auctions will be held throughout the convention.

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 in Louisville. Judge Jim Smith, Mississippi Supreme Court, will be the keynote speaker.

Other highlights include mini Ag in the Classroom (AITC) workshops and an AITC program presented by Matt Scramlin, AFBF, Washington, D.C. MFBF Safety Specialist John Hubbard will talk about the Fatal Vision program.

For more information, contact MFBF Women's Program Coordinator Clara Bilbo at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4245.

2007 Corn Crop

The November/December issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine takes a look at Mississippi's 2007 corn crop.

Mississippi corn acreage increased from 340,000 acres in 2006 to 980,000 acres in 2007. The state is expected to produce 123.5 million bushels of corn this year, up from 35.8 million bushels last year.

Record yields have been recorded in the Delta, where most of this season's corn was grown, but corn did not fare that well in all areas of the state. Dry conditions made for a very poor corn crop in some fields. Depending on soil type, yields varied greatly.

The United States Department of Agriculture has predicted our nation will produce its largest corn crop in history – approximately 13.1 billion bushels. The previous record of 11.8 billion bushels was set in 2004.

Most of the record crop will come from the Great Plains, central Corn Belt and Delta areas, where growing conditions have been ideal.

Farm Bureau's Grassroots Process

Farm Bureau's Public Policy Department works with our members to develop the policy that guides our organization in the State Legislature and U.S. Congress. The next issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* examines this policy development and implementation process.

We also talk with Phil Bryant and Jamie Franks, candidates for lieutenant governor, about eminent domain

Finally, we take a look at how the farm bill impacts consumers and the economy.

The General Election is only a month away. Don't forget to exercise your right to vote on Nov. 6.

Region One Young Farmer Social

Region One will host its first annual Fall Young Farmer Social on Friday, Nov. 9, at Hopson's Commissary in Clarkdale. The event will begin at 7 p.m.

"We are so happy to be able to host another event to better involve our Region One young farmers with Farm Bureau," said Young Farmer Representative Patrick Swindoll. "We sincerely appreciate the support of our sponsors, especially our friends with Land Bank, for their generous help in hosting this event.

"We encourage all young farmers and their spouses to attend."

Grain Bin Safety

Storage and handling of large volumes of grain on farms is a common practice in many areas.

Automated equipment has made handling of grain easy and fast, but grain storage structures and handling equipment create hazardous work areas.

Safety Programs Coordinator Mike Blankenship writes about Grain Bin Safety in the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine. He cautions farm workers to take the proper steps to put safety first.

Seminars for Farmwomen

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Mississippi State University Extension Service, and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce are sponsoring business management

seminars for farmwomen called "Mississippi Women in Agriculture – Annie's Project."

The first seminar was held in September in Jackson. The next two are scheduled for Oct. 23-25 in Starkville and Nov. 7-9 in Hattiesburg.

Preregistration is required and application deadline is Oct. 9 for Starkville and Oct. 24 for Hattiesburg.

Cost to attend is \$60. For more information, contact your local Extension office. You may also call (662) 325-3080 or visit www.msucares.com/womeninag/.

Carbon Credit Programs

Farmers and other landowners have an opportunity to benefit from the carbon contained in their soil and trees.

In the next issue of our magazine, Environmental Programs Specialist Andy Whittington looks at the carbon credit buying and selling process and discusses eligible landowner projects.

For more information, call Whittington or Brook Stuart at 1-800-227-8244, extensions 4238 and 4243.

Farm Bureau Website Redesigned

The official website for the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, www.msfb.com, has a new look and many new features that should be of interest to all members and anyone involved in agriculture.

The front page contains current general agricultural news and information along with links to all other parts of the site.

In addition to describing the features and programs of the organization, the redesigned site also has a number of new features that will keep visitors up-to-date on current events in agriculture.

The Markets page has futures quotes, Mississippi cash prices, commentaries and other vital information regarding commodity marketing.

In Public Policy, visitors can read the latest editions of *Capitol Comments*, *National News Update* and current legislative news.

Current environmental news is available on the Environmental page, and certain commodities have up-to-date news available on their respective pages.

Another new feature is the MFBFtv page that allows visitors to watch videos produced by Mississippi Farm Bureau. These video files can be very large so this feature might be better used by people with high speed internet access.

As always, current and past editions of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine are available to be read online, along with current and past editions of *Grassroots Leader* newsletter.

Check out the newly-designed website and bookmark it in your browser so that it is readily available to you for the latest in news about agriculture and Farm Bureau.

Scholarship Recipients

Recipients of the \$1,500 Berta White Scholarship were announced recently. They are Emily Irwin of Carroll County and Samantha Webb of Scott County.

Young Farmers and Ranchers Foundation Scholarships were awarded as follows: Meredith McCurdy, Panola County, \$2,000 Young Farmer Scholarship; Brittany Beasley, Oktibbeha County, \$2,000 Young Farmer Scholarship; Rachel Aiken, Tate County, \$2,000 Young Farmer Scholarship; and Jessica Washburn, Hinds County, \$2,000 Young Farmer Scholarship. Colbi Parker, Calhoun County, received the \$1,000 Hugh Arant Scholarship; and Walter West, Copiah County, received the \$1,000 Don Waller Scholarship.

MFBF Land Program

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.

"Issues impacting modern property owners run the gamut from mineral rights, recreational uses, agritourism, 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."

Ervin says he is looking forward to meeting and working with property owners across the state. For more information, contact him at 601-551-5311.

Give Our Ag Students a Gift that Keeps on Giving

Christmas is a time of giving. At this year's Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting, you have several great opportunities to do your Christmas shopping while helping a good cause.

The Young Farmers and Ranchers Program will again host silent and live auctions and the Women's Program will offer the General Store. Proceeds from these events will help students with tuition costs.

This year, the Young Farmers and Ranchers Scholarship Foundation awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to deserving college students while the Women's Program awarded the Berta White Scholarship to two deserving female college students.

Remember to bring your checkbook to Annual Meeting. Do some of your Christmas shopping and give our ag students a gift that keeps on giving.

For more information, contact Young Farmers and Ranchers Coordinator Greg Shows at 601-977-4277 and Women's Program Coordinator Clara Bilbo at 601-977-4245.

Dairy Committee's 2007 Activities

In 2007, the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) Dairy Advisory Committee aggressively worked to aid the dairy industry in Mississippi. Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation has been at the forefront of this effort.

During the 2007 Mississippi Legislative Session, Farm Bureau was successful in securing several provisions to aid Mississippi's dairy industry. Among them was Senate Bill 3199, which creates the Mississippi Milk Producers Transportation Cost Assistance Loan Fund.

This loan program is designed to help dairy farmers offset transportation costs incurred to them by allowing them to qualify for a no-interest loan in the amount of their actual transportation cost.

The committee also worked to make adjustments to the Federal Marketing Order.

For more MFBF Dairy Advisory Committee activities, see the upcoming issue of *Mississippi Farm Country*.

Agri-view Schedule

Mississippi's cotton crop was the smallest in recorded history this year. Learn about the cotton industry and about how cotton is classed on the next *Agri-view* television program.

Agri-view airs on Nov. 28 at 5:30 p.m. on RFD-TV. You can find it on Channel 9409 on the Dish Network and on Channel 379 on DirecTV.

Agri-view is a production of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

According to Hal Pepper, Extension Economist, Farm Business Management, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, if you sell livestock because of drought, you may be able to postpone some of the income tax into a later tax year. He writes that, because of the prolonged drought in certain areas in recent years, Congress made some important changes to weather-related livestock sales in 2004.

For more detailed information, see the upcoming issue of the *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine. Or call Jon Kilgore, MFBF Commodity Coordinator for Beef, at 601-278-3809.

What Are My Options?

In 2006, most of our state was declared a federal disaster area due to drought. In 2007, the same drought conditions continued primarily in the northern part of our state. Some counties in Mississippi have been declared federal disaster areas, and we feel additional counties will be added to this list.



MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

P. O. Box 1972

Jackson, MS 39215-1972