

Farmers' testimony to help shape new farm bill legislation

Alabama farmers had their first shot at shaping the 2012 farm bill when they addressed members of the House Agriculture Committee during a meeting in Troy, May 15.

Several leaders of the Alabama Farmers Federation testified before the committee, which is holding hearings throughout the country seeking input into the bill that will cover everything from crop insurance and support prices to food stamps and rural development.

Federation Southeast Area Vice President Ricky Wiggins of Andalusia told members of the committee that good farm policy is not only important to farmers, but to all Americans. He said he thinks the current farm bill works well and cautioned committee members not to shift funds out of the commodity programs or implement more costly environmental regulations.

"Providing for the continued stability of American farms is the best way to strengthen rural communities, conserve natural resources and ensure a safe and affordable food supply," he said.

Federation Board Member Carl Sanders, who serves as president of the Alabama Peanut Producers Association, also testified. He said the peanut marketing loan amount set by the current farm bill is not sufficient to be a real safety net for producers. He asked that world market prices be included when establishing the loan repayment rate for peanuts.

Clay County Farmers Federation President Lamar Dewberry encouraged the committee members to continue cost-share funding for forest management practices and to supply proper funding to the U.S. Forest Service Cooperative State and Private Program.



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Farmers Testify



Alabama Farmers Federation Southeast Area Vice President Ricky Wiggins of Andalusia testifies before members of the House Agriculture Committee during a hearing on the 2012 Farm Bill. Wiggins and other farm leaders throughout the South encouraged members to retain safety nets for farmers, improve crop insurance programs and control wasteful spending by Congress.

Auburn University selects new ag dean

William Batchelor, head of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at Mississippi State University, has been named dean of Auburn University's College of Agriculture, succeeding Dr. Richard Guthrie, who is retiring after more than 25 years of service to Auburn.



Batchelor

Batchelor also will assume the directorship of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, pending approval by the Auburn University Board of Trustees at its June 18 meeting. He will

begin his appointment on July 15.

"The role and practice of agriculture is much different today than just a few years ago, and it continues to rapidly evolve," Auburn President Jay Gogue said. "Dr. Batchelor is a highly accomplished researcher and administrator whose leadership will ensure that Auburn stays ahead of those changes and strengthens our service to the state."

"Auburn has an outstanding reputation for teaching, research and outreach in agriculture," Batchelor said, "and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station is nationally recognized for its valuable service to Alabama, the

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Canola Field Day



A canola and sunflower field day was held May 6 at R3 Farms in Piedmont. The meeting provided information on production practices, market availability and economic benefits of non-genetically modified canola and high-oleic sunflowers grown in the Southeast. From left are Alabama Farmers Federation District Director Donnie Garrett of Centre, Regional Extension Agent David Derrick of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and David Rogers, whose farm hosted the event.

Alabama Hay Barn connects buyers, sellers

The Alabama Farmers Federation's Hay and Forage Division is promoting a Web site designed to connect buyers and sellers of hay year round.

AlabamaHayBarn.com offers a variety of features that allows hay and forage farmers to market hay, including detailed listings that feature photos and descriptions of the type, location, size, storage and price. Farmers (sellers) also may provide forage analysis data.

Alabama Farmers Federation members in good standing are allowed to use the site free of charge. Farmers who are not Fed-

eration members pay only 20 cents per round bale and 2 cents per square bale advertised plus a listing fee of \$30. Non-members are encouraged to join the Alabama Farmers Federation because dues are only \$30. The site also provides e-mail alerts to notify buyers when new listings are available.

Listing hay on the site is quick and easy. Go to AlabamaHayBarn.com and fill out the form on the "Get Listed" page. For more information, contact Federation Hay & Forage Division Director Nate Jaeger at (334) 451-2877 or njaeger@AlfaFarmers.org.

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nation and the world. I look forward to working with the faculty and staff as we build upon the history of accomplishments and continue to seek ways to serve the people of Alabama. Dawn and I are looking forward to joining the Auburn family and being part of the university's success in the future."

At Mississippi State, Batchelor is director of the Sustainable Energy Research Center, an entity he played a lead role in establishing in 2005 with \$26 million in U.S. Department of Energy grants he was instrumental in securing.

The center conducts research on sources of renewable fuels (including bio-crude, bio-oil and syngas) that don't compete with existing global food supply crops, such as corn and soybeans. Batchelor also is director of the Energy Institute at Mississippi State, which has about 200 researchers in several centers and departments.

In 2009, he was named a Fellow of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers for his contributions to information and electrical technologies and biological engineering. He also serves as president of the Institute of Biological Engineers.

As dean of the College of Agriculture, he will report to Auburn Provost Mary Ellen Mazey while, as director of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, he will report to Gogue.

Batchelor earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural engineering at the University of Georgia in 1986 and 1987, respectively, and his doctorate in agricultural engineering at the University of Florida in 1993. He worked at Iowa State University from 1994 until 2005, advancing to the rank of professor.

He joined the Mississippi State faculty in 2005. From 2005 to 2007, he also served as a Distinguished International Professor for the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany.

Blackberry, high-tunnel fruit production highlight workshop

There will be a workshop on blackberry production and high-tunnel fruit production June 11 from 3-6 p.m. at the Chilton Research and Extension Center in Clanton.

Workshop topics include blackberry production systems,

variety trial updates and insect and disease issues of blackberries. Discussions also will be held about blackberry, Satsuma and strawberry high tunnel research.

For more information, contact Gary Gray GRAYGAR@aces.edu or call (205) 280-6268.

Federation members and staff meet with congressional leaders

Alabama Farmers Federation President Jerry Newby and Director of Governmental and Agricultural Programs Jimmy Carlisle were in Washington last week meeting with members of Congress and American Farm Bureau officials.

Carlisle attended a House Agriculture Committee meeting and visited with the staff of Alabama Reps. Robert Aderholt, R-Haleyville, Bobby Bright, D-Montgomery and Mike Rogers, R-Anniston. Topics of discussion included the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, estate taxes, a pending free-trade agreement with Cuba and re-opening the Japanese export market to U.S. beef.

The previous week Lauderdale County Farmers Federation President Charlie Thompson and Federation Meat Goat and Sheep Director Mitt Walker were in Washington for an American Sheep Industry meeting. While there, the Alabama delegation met with the staffs of Aderholt and Bright as well as those of Reps. Jo Bonner, R-Mobile, Parker Griffith, R-Huntsville, and Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Mobile.

Thompson stressed the importance of funding the Eastern Region USDA/APHIS office to help control predators; increasing funding for scrapie research and control; continuation of mandatory price reporting for livestock and the potential negative impact of the proposed America's Commitment to Clean Water Act, which would expand the reach of the Clean Water Act beyond navigable waterways.

**38th Annual
Commodity
Producers
Conference
Aug. 5-7
Columbus, Ga.**

Helping Candidates



Alabama Farmers Federation members from throughout the state are involved in helping elect candidates endorsed by the organization. Alabama Attorney General Troy King, left, is assisted by Dale County Farmers Federation Board Members Len Windham and Ricky Tyler in putting up signs along U.S. Highway 231 north of Ozark last week. A complete list of candidates endorsed by the Federation will appear in "Neighbors" and "Alfa Friends & Family" magazines.

Calhoun County Cooking Contest



The Calhoun County Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Committee recently held its Heritage Cooking Contest where the category was "pies." From left are second-place winner Phyllis Johnson, first-place winner Faye Hammonds, Doris Prickett, third-place winner Linda Findley and Ginny Costner. Hammonds will represent the county in the state contest this fall.

Soldiers Honored



The Russell County Farmers Federation, represented by County Women's Leadership Committee Members Caroline Batcheldor, left, and Joann Laney, honored Staff Sgt. James Mosley at the Russell County/Phenix City Chamber of Commerce Biscuits and Breakfast meeting this month. Baskets, like the one presented to Mosley, are routinely given to service men and women and contain items produced and distributed in Russell County. Batcheldor and Laney serve as chamber ambassadors.



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Alfa awards car to Teacher of the Year

Alabama's 2010-2011 Teacher of the Year, Phil Rodney Wilson, a music teacher at Ogletree Elementary School in the Auburn City School System, received a year's use of a new automobile, courtesy of Alfa Insurance Co. and the Alabama Farmers Federation during a ceremony at the Alfa home office in Montgomery May 13.

This is the 14th year Alfa has presented an automobile to the state Teacher of the Year.

During the presentation, Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan announced the continuation of the Alfa Teacher of the Month program.

By winning Alabama's Teacher of the Year, Wilson automatically becomes the state's candidate for National Teacher of the Year.

Top Teacher Receives Car



From left are State Superintendent of Education Dr. Joseph B. Morton, Alabama Teacher of the Year Phil Rodney Wilson, Alfa Executive Vice President of Marketing Herman Watts and Alabama Farmers Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan. Wilson received a year's use of a new automobile, courtesy of Alfa Insurance Co. and the Alabama Farmers Federation during a ceremony at the Alfa home office in Montgomery.