

AFBF and AG CONNECT Expo team up in Atlanta

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and AG CONNECT Expo 2011 are teaming up with the co-location of the 2011 AFBF Annual Meeting and AG CONNECT Expo 2011, both to be held in early January 2011 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

The American Farm Bureau is the nation's largest farm organization, and AG CONNECT Expo is North America's new global agriculture exhibition. AFBF's 2011 annual meeting will be Jan. 9-12, while the AG CONNECT Expo runs Jan. 8-10 with a "preview day" on Jan. 7 by special admission.

The co-location will provide Farm Bureau members attending the 2011 AFBF annual meeting with the added value of convenient access to AG CONNECT Expo show floor on Jan. 8-10. The AFBF annual meeting attendees will have the opportunity to participate in an event that offers the best in technological advances and showcases innovative agricultural equipment, inputs and services.

Farm Bureau members will receive a one-time exception in AG CONNECT's standard registration.

"The cooperative arrangement will give Farm Bureau members an opportunity to participate in a world-class agricultural exposition while they are attending our meeting," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "But it also gives the AG CONNECT Expo an opportunity to benefit greatly by having access to a diverse group of agricultural leaders — Farm Bureau members from across the nation who will be gathering in Atlanta to conduct Farm Bureau business."

Visit AG CONNECT Expo at www.AgConnect.com



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Cultivator

www.AlfaFarmers.org ■ News from the Alabama Farmers Federation

Teachers on Tour



Jeremy Sessions of Sessions Farms in Grand Bay discusses this year's sweet corn crop with Millie Mostella, a sixth-grade science teacher from Litchfield Middle School in Gadsden. Sessions Farms was among those teachers visited during the Alabama Agriculture in the Classroom Summer Institute June 2-4 in Mobile.

Teachers soak up farm experience with AITC

Despite frequent downpours, nearly 100 Alabama teachers soaked up lots of useful information as they toured farms and learned classroom activities to help introduce their students to agriculture. The teachers were taking part in the annual Agriculture in the Classroom Summer Institute, held June 2-4 in Mobile.

The workshop included activities for kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers and field trips to several area farms.

"The summer institute provides books and hands-on activities teachers can carry back to their classrooms," said AITC Chairman Kim Earwood, who also serves

as director of the Alabama Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Division. "The activities teach children about agriculture, while at the same time reinforces classroom curriculums of history, math, science, reading and writing that complement the Alabama Department of Education's course of study."

While teachers expressed appreciation for all areas of the summer institute, most said the farm tours were their favorite.

"The people have been tremendous," said Millie Mostella, a sixth-grade science teacher at Litchfield

See AITC pg. 2

Jackson County Scholarships



The Jackson County Farmers Federation recently donated \$3,000 to help sponsor the Jackson County FFA Outdoor Seminar set for June 21-24 at Paint Rock Valley Lodge & Retreat. The event allows 25-30 county FFA officers to spend time learning about nature with a variety of speakers, activities and events. From left are Jackson County Farmers Federation Vice President Phillip Thompson, Pisgah High School FFA President Emily Kirby, Pisgah High School FFA agriscience teacher Russell Poe and Jackson County Farmers Federation President Frank Hughes.

AITC from pg 1

Middle School in Gadsden. "The farmers have been so nice and meeting the other teachers has been wonderful. It's great to share ideas."

Mostella said in some ways, teaching is like farming.

"You have to love what you do," she said. "Being here and seeing these farmers makes you appreciate the food we have even more. You want to go to bat for farmers and the plight they have to go through to raise the food we enjoy."

For many teachers, the farm tours were their first visit to a working farm or meeting a farmer.

"The tours gave them first-hand experience and the books, posters, DVDs and other materials sent home with them will help them share that experience with their students when they get back to their classroom," Earwood said.

Proceeds from Ag Tag sales are the primary funding source for AITC.

EPA draft proposes changes to pesticide permits

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publicly proposed its long awaited National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) draft permit for pesticide applications June 4. Comments for the proposal must be received by July 19. AFBF and AFF staffs are reviewing the draft permit and will provide guidance and an outline of proposed comments as soon as possible in Federation publications.

"While at this point we are only dealing with a draft or proposed permit, we have already opened a dialogue with the staff at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), who will be developing the state program based on this proposed permit from EPA," said Mitt Walker. "As with other states delegated by EPA to handle NPDES permits, ADEM is the agency farmers and other pesticide applicators will contact to apply for permit coverage once the state permit is developed.

"Depending on the comments EPA receives on the proposal, the permit could be modified, but we have to move forward with the expectation that at least some pesticide applications in Alabama will be affected."

The draft permit, fact sheet, Federal Register notice and all other relevant documents can be found at tinyurl.com/EPAdraft

This proposed permit follows a federal court order that rejected EPA's 2006 rule exempting those who apply agricultural pesticides in conformance with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) labels from needing to obtain a NPDES permit under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Despite efforts by American Farm Bureau Federation, Congress and other industry groups to request a review of the appellate ruling, the Supreme Court declined to review the case, clearing the way for EPA to propose its draft permit.

The 6th Circuit ruling means

some pesticide applications are now considered discharges under the CWA, requiring a permit to avoid liability for discharges. The proposed draft permit covers four categories: aquatic weeds and algae, aquatic animals, forest canopy and mosquitoes and other flying insects.

The 6th Circuit gave EPA until April 9, 2011 to develop a general permit for states and tribal lands that do not have delegated NPDES permitting authority.

The agency's permit also will provide a model to states with delegated programs. There is concern by many agricultural groups that language in the proposed rule may open the door to further litigation or regulation of other pesticide applications.

For questions related to the comment period, draft permit, or other information related to the program, contact Walker at (334) 613-4757 or by email at mwalker@alfafarmers.org.

Obituary

Dr. Leonard E. Ensminger, who served as vice president of the Lee County Farmers Federation for 36 years, died June 5. He was 97.

Ensminger was head of Auburn University's Department of Agronomy and Soils from 1966 until his retirement in 1978. Following retirement, he focused on raising polled Hereford cattle and was active in the Auburn University Agricultural Alumni Association, the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Lee County Extension Service. He served as chairman of the Lee County Farmers Federation Beef Committee for 42 years and was a member of the Auburn United Methodist Church.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Isabel S. Ensminger, and two sons. Survivors include a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Linda B. Ensminger of Waverly; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

The family requests memorial donations be directed to the Dr. L.E. Ensminger Scholarship Endowment at 202 Funchess Hall, Auburn University, Alabama 36849 or the American Red Cross.

RFD-TV to feature Alabama farmers

Several Alabama farmers will be featured on American Farm Bureau's *Voices of Agriculture* when it airs June 23 at 5:30 p.m. on RFD-TV.

The programs, which were produced by Alabama Farmers Federation Broadcast Director Kevin Worthington, will feature stories on the House Ag Committee field hearing in Troy; feral hogs and other nuisance animals that are causing millions of dollars in damage to state crops and timberland; Cattle for Christ, a Christian ministry based in Enterprise; and Alabama's Farm of Distinction Winners Shep and Rite Morris of Macon County.

FFA Hall of Honor



Several leaders in the Alabama Farmers Federation were among those recently inducted into the FFA Wall of Honor. The ceremony was held at the Alabama Cattlemen's Association Building in Montgomery, June 2. From left are Alabama State Superintendent Dr. Joseph B. Morton with inductees John Sudduth of Winston County, Van Smith of Autauga County and Mahlon Richburg of Lee County.

National survey of honeybees under way

Alabama is one of 13 states being surveyed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for honeybee pests and diseases.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Pennsylvania State University (PSU) will conduct the surveys.

The survey will help USDA scientists determine the prevalence of parasites and disease-causing microorganisms that may be contributing to the decline of honeybee colonies nationwide.

The voluntary survey includes 350 apiaries across the selected states and will last through the end of the year.

APHIS developed the survey protocol jointly with ARS and PSU

and allocated \$550,000 in the 2008 Farm Bill for the survey.

Survey kits have been mailed to state apiary specialists, who will collect samples of bees and debris from the apiaries in their states. ARS and PSU scientists will test the samples for specific pests and pathogens.

APHIS is particularly interested to know whether foreign mites of the genus *Tropilaelaps* have entered the United States.

Other survey states include California, Georgia, Indiana, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Washington. Once the samples have been analyzed, APHIS will summarize the results and post the summary on its website.

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

Morris Honored



Alabama Farm of Distinction Winner Shep Morris of Macon County, left, recently received a special resolution by the Alabama House of Representatives commending him for being named the state's top farmer. State Rep. Pebblin Warren, D-Tuskegee, presented Morris the resolution at a recent meeting of the Macon County Farmers Federation. Morris serves as county president. He will represent Alabama in the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year contest in Moultrie, Ga., Oct. 19-21.



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Precision ag meetings to be held July 6

Automatic section control, yield monitoring and Continuously Operating Reference Stations will be among the topics on the agenda July 6 when the Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems hosts two meetings on precision agriculture.

The first meeting will be 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. (lunch provided) at the Wiregrass Research & Extension Center in Headland.

The second meeting will be in New Brockton at the Coffee County Community Room, 6-8:30 p.m. (dinner provided). Registration for the meetings is not required but is encouraged.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Amy Winstead at (256) 353-8702 or winstat@auburn.edu or visit the Precision Ag Web site at www.AlabamaPrecisionAgOnline.com.

Youth Leadership



About 120 delegates from 27 counties attended the annual Alabama Farmers Federation Youth Leadership Conference at the 4-H center in Columbiana on June 11-13. From left, front row, are State Young Farmers Committee Member Daniel Hall of Randolph County, Amber Stallworth of Clarke County and Colby Mansmann of Crenshaw County; back row, Chelsey Dunn of Dale County and chaperone Ashley Peak of Geneva County.