

Agriculture Disaster Signed by President

In a last minute push before the Memorial Day break, the ag disaster assistance spending measure passed the House and the Senate and was signed into law by the president. Also included in the legislation are an increase and extension of small business expensing and an increase in the minimum wage.

The bill contains \$3 billion in emergency relief for farmers and ranchers, primarily to compensate crop and livestock producers for lost production. USDA officials expect that it will take several months before payment applications will be taken. Specifically, the bill contains the following funding:

•**Crop Loss Assistance Program at \$1.552 billion:** A producer must have incurred losses for the 2005 or 2006 crop or the 2007 crop year (for crop plantings before February 28, 2007), and if losses were incurred in multiple years, the producer must elect to receive assistance for only one year. The payment rate will be 42 percent of the established price, and producers who do not have crop insurance for insurable commodities will not be eligible for assistance for that commodity.

•**Livestock Compensation Program at \$1.203 billion:** Losses must have incurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, and if losses were over multiple years, producers must elect one year for which to receive assistance. Payments will be 61 percent of the payment rate established in the program.

•**Lifting the cap on the Conservation Security Program at \$115 million:** The cap was originally included in the FY2007 Joint Resolution.

•**MILC payments at \$31 million for FY2007:** It waives the

emergency designation beyond 2008 thereby providing the Ag Committee with approximately \$2.435 billion for the baseline.

•**Livestock Indemnity Program at \$29 million:** Losses must have been incurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, and if losses were over multiple years, producers must elect one year for which to receive assistance. Indemnity payments will be made at not less than 26 percent of the market value on the day before the death of the animal.

•**Emergency Conservation Program at \$16 million.**

•**Dairy Production Loss Assistance at \$16 million.**

•**Small Business/Farmworker Assistance at \$16 million.**

Schedule for Summer Commodity Conferences

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Summer Commodity Conferences have been scheduled as follows:

Beef - June 15 at Rogers' Bar H Farm, Collins; **Peanuts** - June 18 at the George County Extension in Lucedale; **Dairy** - June 19 at the Walthall County Farm Bureau in Tylertown;

Poultry - June 20 at the Multipurpose Extension Building in Collins; **Swine** - June 21 at the Oktibbeha County Farm Bureau in Starkville; **Grains & Soybeans** - June 29 at Holmes Community College in Grenada;

Rice - July 12 at the Bolivar County Expo Building in Cleveland; **Forestry** - July 17-18 at MSU; and **Cotton** - July 19 at the Grenada County Extension Auditorium in Grenada.

For more information, contact Nancy Britt at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4230.

Compliance Date for CAFOs

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the "Federal Register," extending the compliance deadline for new and existing CAFOs from July 31, 2007, to February 27, 2009. This proposal is open for public comment until July 11, 2007.

EPA is also proposing to extend the implementation date for Nutrient Management Plans (NMP) from July 31, 2007, to February 27, 2009. This extension will have no effect on Mississippi. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has been requiring NMPs since the 1970s.

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) will be submitting comments on this proposed rulemaking. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Brook Stuart at 601-977-4243.

2007 Legislative Session

The 2007 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature ended on April 3, 2007. The following are significant bills supported by Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation that were passed into law during the 2007 legislative session:

- **Boll Weevil - House Bill 861** allows for a continuation of a portion of the sales and/or warehouse tax on cotton to be diverted into the Boll Weevil Management Fund until all debt owed by the program is paid off. Cotton producers already pay a warehouse tax used to repay the debt incurred in eradicating the boll weevil. Continuation of state funding is vital to paying the remaining debt and providing economic relief to cotton farmers;

- **Peanut Promotion - Senate Bill 2986** creates the Peanut Promotion Board, which allows Mississippi peanut farmers to collect an assessment on peanuts grown in the state for the purpose of research, education and promoting Mississippi peanuts;

- **Dairy - Senate Bill 3199** creates the Mississippi Milk Producers Transportation Cost Assistance Loan Fund. The 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. In order to qualify for the loan, the dairy farmer must produce and sell at least 300,000 pounds of milk during a calendar year. The loan cannot exceed \$20,000;

- **Forestry - House Bill 1628** increases the maximum amount of income tax credit for approved reforestation practices for eligible tree species on eligible lands. The increase on the lifetime tax credit is from \$10,000 to \$75,000.

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation also supported appropriations bills to fund Mississippi State University (MSU). During the 2007 session, Farm Bureau was able to help secure an additional \$11.3 million in funding for the MSU Division of Agriculture.

For more detailed information, see the July/August issue of *Mississippi Farm Country*.

Andy Whittington Joins Staff

Andy Whittington has joined the staff of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation as an Environmental Specialist.

A native of New Albany in Union County, Andy is a graduate of Mississippi State University (MSU) with a master's degree in Ag Economics. He previously worked in the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics as a Research Associate under a Biomass Grant from the United States Department of Energy.

He is the son of A. L. and Pam Whittington, and his father is a former Union County Extension Agent.

"We are pleased to welcome Andy into our Farm Bureau family," said Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President David Waide. "His background and experience will be an asset to our organization."

Youth Safety Seminar registration deadline

Registration deadline for the 2007 Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Youth Safety Seminar is June 22. The seminar will be held July 9-12 at Kamp Kumbaya in Eupora. To participate, young people must be entering the 9th through 12th grades in the fall of 2007.

If you know of a youth who is interested in attending, contact your county Farm Bureau office or call the state office at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4242.

Gary Langley Golf Tournament

The annual Gary Langley Memorial Golf Tournament will be held June 8th at the Refuge in Flowood.

Each summer, the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Program organizes the tournament to raise money for its scholarship foundation.

For more information, contact YF&R Program Coordinator Greg Shows at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4277.

Mississippi Cotton

The U.S. Department of Agriculture predicts Mississippi will plant approximately 740,000 acres of cotton in 2007.

Last year, Mississippi planted roughly 1.2 million acres of cotton. This estimated 40 percent reduction is due primarily to the increased corn acreage planted in Mississippi in light of positive market conditions attributed to the nationwide boom in ethanol production.

Cotton is an important element of Mississippi's economy. Just last year, Mississippi ranked third in the nation for planted cotton acreage. Within the state last year, cotton ranked third among all commodities in actual dollar value of production, at

an estimated \$583 million. Roughly 1,596 farms produced about 2.1 million bales of cotton last year.

According to the Department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University, cotton had a direct contribution of \$253 million in value-added benefit and contributed about 5,250 jobs to the economy of Mississippi in 2004.

Spillover impacts, which are defined as economic activities stimulated in the overall economy by one particular industry, added about \$496 million in value-added benefit and about 10,650 jobs to the economy of Mississippi that same year.

For more information about Mississippi cotton, see the July/August issue of *Mississippi Farm Country* magazine.

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 Aug. 1 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 Soybeans

It is estimated that a little over 1.5 million acres of soybeans will be planted in 2007, compared to 1.6 million acres in 2006. Of the 40 counties that produce soybeans in the state, Bolivar County had the most acreage with 216,500 acres in 2006.

The value of the 2006 crop was \$2.7 million, down from \$3.4 million in 2005 mostly due to the dry weather experienced in 2006.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicts for the 2007 crop a 2% increase in domestic use, a 2% increase in crushing of soybeans, and a 1-2% increase in soybean meal consumption. And as the trend to renewable energy continues, the demand for the oil from soybeans to make biodiesel is increasing.

With the reduction in acres and the increased demand, USDA predicts a 225-million-bushel reduction in ending stocks for next year, which could keep prices at or above the recent high levels.

For more information, see the July/August issue of *Mississippi Farm Country*.

Regional Contests

Regional Talent and Miss Farm Bureau Mississippi contests have been scheduled as follows:

Region 3 - July 14; **Region 5** - July 19

Region 8 - July 21; **Region 1** - July 17

Region 4 - Aug. 11; **Region 6** - Aug. 18

Region 2 - Aug. 25; **Region 7** - Sept. 15

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

Mississippi Poultry Spotlight

Mississippi poultry is the featured commodity in the next issue of *Mississippi Farm Country*. Poultry is Mississippi's number one agricultural commodity in terms of farm gate value.

In 2006, the state farm gate value of poultry totaled \$1.977 billion, down 10 percent from 2005. State broiler production was down almost 6 percent to 804 million birds from the 853 million raised in 2005; however, national broiler production rose slightly in 2006.

Broiler production is the primary income-generating facet of the state poultry industry, but the egg industry also provides a substantial contribution to the agricultural economy of our state.

Last year was a challenging year for Mississippi poultry growers because of decreased demand from the export market due to the avian influenza scare. The United States has had no cases of the highly pathogenic form of avian influenza, Asian H5N1, but reports of Asian H5N1 in the Pacific Rim countries led to more and more countries refusing to import our poultry.

Experts say high grain prices will likely pose a challenge to poultry production in 2007. Corn prices are skyrocketing in response to interest in using corn as an alternative fuel. Corn is an important ingredient in poultry feed and high grain prices increase the cost of production.

AITC Workshops

Ag in the Classroom Workshops for Teachers and Volunteers are scheduled as follows:

June 19 – Covington County Multi-Purpose Building in Collins

June 20 – Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead

June 21 – Southern Farm Bureau Life in Jackson

Teachers and volunteers are encouraged to attend one of these workshops. For more information, contact Clara Bilbo, AITC Coordinator, at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4245.

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.

ATV Discount Coupon

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and Got Gear Motorsports, LLC, in Ridgeland have teamed up to offer Farm Bureau members an exclusive \$500 discount coupon on the purchase of new ATVs, motorcycles and 4-wheel utility vehicles.

This discount only applies to ATVs that are 400 cc or greater and motorcycles that are 800 cc or greater and does not apply to any other special promotions. Got Gear is a dealer of Yamaha, Kawasaki and Polaris ATVs and 4-wheel utility vehicles; and Yamaha, Victory, Kawasaki and KTM motorcycles.

To receive the \$500 discount coupon, you must call Dedra Luke at 601-977-4169 or, toll-free, at 1-800-227-8244, ext. 4169. Upon verification that you are a member, the ATV Discount Coupon will be mailed to you.

Amerlink Log Homes

Mississippi Farm Bureau members are eligible for a 25% discount off the purchase of a log home package from AmerLink Ltd. AmerLink offers a standard line of over 75 residential models as well as garages, commercial designs, outbuildings and barns.

For additional information, contact AmerLink directly at 1-800-872-4254 or visit them at www.amerlink.com/msfb. This website is still in the process of being created, so it may not be up and running yet.

AmerLink will be sending each county office a table-top display that will have a catalog of all the different style homes and coupons for your members.

Truck Crops Branch Vegetable Twilight Tour

The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station's Truck Crops Branch will host a supper and twilight tour of vegetable crops research on Tuesday, June 19. Registration will begin at 5:30 pm., with the plot tour beginning at 5:45 p.m.

Tour stops will include commercial cultivar trials, the All-America Selections Trials, production research plots, and the station's certified organic plots.

There is no charge; however, RSVP for supper is requested to Janie Taylor at 601-892-3731, ext.10, or janiet @ext.msstate.edu.

Visit Truck Crops on the internet at:
<http://www.msstate.edu/dept/cmrec/truckcrops.htm>

Choice Hotels

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation members get 20 percent off the published rack room rate at any participating location of Choice Hotels brand hotels. This discount is based on availability at any Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Quality, Sleep Inn, Clarion, Main Stay Suites, Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn.

Members can make their hotel reservations online at choicehotels.com or by calling 1-800-258-2847 and providing the customer service representative the assigned Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation discount number of 00058432.



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