

Cultivator

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Summer Rain Shoots Corn Crop Sky High

Although the U.S. corn crop is forecast down 7 percent from last year, Alabama farmers could have record corn yields, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Aug. 10 production forecast.

Alabama corn is estimated at 38.8 million bushels, up 3 percent from 2016. Yields are forecast at 165 bushels an acre, up 45 bushels.

Fayette County's Lance Whitehead planted 200 acres of corn, 1,700 acres of cotton and 800 acres of peanuts. He expects 140 bushels of corn per acre — if wild hogs don't destroy it first.

"Feral hogs continue to damage our corn, and we can't get in the field to pick because of the rain," he said.

Alabama cotton is forecast at 860,000 bales, up 22 percent, and soybeans should land around 19.4 million bushels, up 48 percent. Despite higher expected yields, the Alabama Farmers Federation's Carla Hornady said planting was difficult for cotton and soybean farmers.

"Some producers received more rain during planting than they normally get in a year, causing many to replant," said Hornady, the Federation's Cotton, Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grain divisions director. "Their persistence to get their crop in paid off as rain continued to fall."

U.S. peanut production is forecast at a record-high 7.43 billion pounds, up 31 percent. Alabama peanuts should weigh in at 866 million pounds, up 39 percent.

"Peanuts are probably the best crop we have," Whitehead said. "We're most excited about them."



Clay County farmer Lamar Dewberry, left, talked to Dr. Kevin Folta following a seminar at the Commodity Producers Conference in Birmingham Aug. 5. Folta, the University of Florida's Horticulture Sciences Department chairman, urged farmers to communicate openly about science, medicine, food and farming with consumers.

Farm Expo, Conference A Success

Nearly 1,000 ag enthusiasts walked, talked, looked and cooked up ideas for success during the Alabama Farmers Federation's 45th Commodity Producers Conference and inaugural Alabama Farm Expo in Birmingham Aug. 3-5.

This was Bart and Krista Williams' first time at the conference. Although they raise cattle in Autauga County, the Williams said they enjoyed learning about poultry production during Friday's Blue Tour in Cullman County.

"We saw the different, innovative ways these producers harvest rainwater, reuse it and are more efficient as a business," said Bart, 25, who is Autauga County Young Farmers chairman.

Tour attendees participated in a social media contest using #AlfaFarmers17. Winners were Phil Sims, Mary McDaniel Helms, Stephanie Miller, Lisa Lake and Amy Stephens.

Saturday, the University of Florida's Dr. Kevin Folta encouraged farmers to be an open resource about science, food and farming for consumers. View Folta's presentation at tinyurl.com/kevinfolta.

About 90 vendors and researchers greeted attendees and visitors at the Alabama Farm Expo that afternoon. There, Cherokee County's Phyllis Jones won a drawing for a \$150 gift card courtesy of Farm Bureau Bank.

The Federation presented \$120,000 to Children's of Alabama Saturday evening. Funds were raised by Federation members, Alfa Insurance employees and Alabama Farm Expo attendees.

Cleburne County's Eric and Carrly Lovvorn were named the 2017 Outstanding Young Farm Family that night. Read about other contest winners in the September Neighbors magazine. More photos are available on Flickr.

Auburn Student Recognized At Annual Meeting



At the Coosa County Farmers Federation (CCFF) annual meeting Aug. 10, county scholarship recipient Blake Pharr was recognized. From left are Coosa County Young Farmers Chair Matthew Sammons; Pharr, an Auburn University sophomore studying forestry; CCFF President Ronnie Brown; and the Alabama Farmers Federation's Brian Hardin, the meeting's keynote speaker.

Alabama Forest Inventory Analysis Sets High Bar

If Alabama's Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) crew maintains its pace from the first half of 2017, the state should out-survey more heavily funded neighboring states of Florida, Georgia and Tennessee.

The crew completed 527 plots from Jan. 1 to June 30 and should complete over 1,000 by Dec. 31, according to the Alabama Forestry Commission.

In comparison, Georgia is on pace to

complete just over 900 plots, Florida 780 and Tennessee 680.

FIA statistics are used in researching mill sites and show investors the species, classes, abundance, quality and hauling distance of available trees.

Existing mills use FIA data to track long-term trends affecting wood procurement. These statistics also help track the spread of invasive plants, like cogongrass.

Experiment Stations To Host Youth Dove Hunts

Guest column from AAES Outlying Units Director Dale Monks

September is almost here, bringing harvest, football and hunting season. Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) locations at Shorter, Marion Junction and Fairhope, in partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, are a few sites hosting fall youth dove hunts.

Children 15 years old and younger may participate. Hunts are Sept. 9 and 16 in Marion, Sept. 9 in Shorter and Oct. 14 and 21 in Fairhope. Learn more at outdooralabama.com/youth-dove-hunts.

All About Ag

- Thanks to a **\$300,000 grant**, infrastructure improvements will continue in Spruce Pine as Mar-Jac Poultry's new \$35 million feed mill nears completion. The Community Development Block Grant, announced in July, will help improve the Franklin County plant's main road.
- **Don Glenn** of Hillsboro was re-elected in July to the National Corn Growers Association's Corn Board for a three-year term.

State's Farmers Care For Communities

Alabama farmers may give back to local nonprofit organizations by applying for the America's Farmers Grow Communities program, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund.

Eligible farmers could direct \$2,500 to rural nonprofits, including food banks, emergency response organizations and youth agriculture programs. More than \$3 million will be awarded in 2018.

Farmers must be 21 years or older and farm at least 250 acres. The enrollment deadline is Nov. 1.

Since 2010, more than 95 donations have benefited Alabama farming communities.

Visit americasfarmers.com to learn more.

New Law Streamlines Farm-To-School Program



Gov. Kay Ivey signed a bill into law July 27 making it easier for farmers and cafeterias to engage in the Farm-To-School program. Ivey is pictured with Alabama Farmers Federation staff; Alabama Department of Ag & Industries delegates, including Commissioner John McMillan; Rep. Elaine Beech; and Sen. Clyde Chambliss. Learn more at AlabamaFarmToSchool.org.

Peanut Producers Talk Farm Income And Issues



Peanut producers and industry professionals attended the Southern Peanut Growers Conference in Sandestin, Florida, July 20-22. They discussed the 2018 farm bill and issues facing producers, like low net farm income. Learn more at tinyurl.com/PeanutIssues. From left are Florida Peanut Producers Association's Ken Barton, Mississippi Peanut Growers' Malcolm Broome, Georgia Peanut Commission's Don Koehler and Alabama Peanut Producers Association's Caleb Bristow.

Commodity Corner

Soybeans

Soybean rust was found mid-month on soybeans in Autauga, Elmore and Marion counties. Kudzu in Hale, Marengo, Pickens, Walker and Winston counties also displayed rust. Fungicide applications may be necessary, as soybeans need protection until pods are full grown. Learn more at tinyurl.com/FungicideUse and tinyurl.com/SoybeanRust.

-Carla Hornady, division director

Beef

USDA's mid-year cattle inventory report revealed herd expansion is likely to continue for the next couple years. Total inventory is 103 million head, up 4 percent from July 2015. Beef cow inventory, at 32.5 million head, was up 7 percent from two years ago. Previously, peak beef cow inventory was in 1995 at about 36 million head.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Horticulture

Fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in produce safety are encouraged to attend Produce Safety Alliance training in Clanton Sept. 28. The Produce Safety Rule is part of the Food Safety Modernization Act, which was passed into law in 2011. Learn more at tinyurl.com/ProduceSafety.

-Mac Higginbotham, division director

Forestry

After last year's severe drought, landowners across the state are reporting a high number of bark beetle-related tree deaths. Landowners noticing dead or dying trees should contact the Alabama Forestry Commission for assistance. The problem can be mitigated, but only if caught early.

-William Green, division director

Poultry

An electrical fire was discovered at a Wayne Farms processing plant near Jack the morning of Aug. 4. Four hundred employees were temporarily evacuated, but no one was harmed. The fire was out by 11 a.m. State fire and local public safety personnel are further investigating the fire. Wayne Farms, the country's sixth-largest vertically integrated poultry producer, employs about 1,200 Alabamians.

-Guy Hall, division director

Peanuts

At the June USA Peanut Congress, attendees were introduced to a toolkit to help tell the peanut's sustainability story. Through SustainablePeanut.com, growers, manufacturers, shellers and allies can find videos, photos, infographics, digital materials and web copy.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

Events & Deadlines

- **August-December** - Quickbooks Classes for Farmers
 - Visit aces.edu/go/734 for locations and dates
- **Sept. 7** - Alabama Farmers Federation Heritage Cooking Contest in Montgomery
- **Sept. 16** - Ag Roundup in Auburn
 - tinyurl.com/AgRoundup17
- **Sept. 23** - Ag Discovery Adventure Day in Shorter
 - tinyurl.com/AgDiscovery17
- **Sept. 21** - Southeastern Hay Contest registration deadline
 - seHayContest.com
- **Sept. 29** - Registration opens for Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Conference in Clanton
 - afvga.org

Strange, Moore Compete For Senate Seat Sept. 26

FarmPAC-endorsed candidate and incumbent U.S. Sen. Luther Strange will face former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore Sept. 26 in a Republican runoff primary election to fill the Senate seat Jeff Sessions vacated earlier this year.

In the primary Aug. 15, Strange received 32.8 percent of votes, while Moore garnered 38.9 percent.

The Republican nominee will face Doug Jones, a former U.S. attorney who won the Democratic primary.

Former Gov. Robert Bentley appointed Strange as senator when Sessions became U.S. attorney general in February.

FarmPAC is the state political action committee of the Alabama Farmers Federation.

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Trading Info At The Farm Expo



Tallapoosa County's Neal Kelly, right, took advantage of the inaugural Alabama Farm Expo Aug. 5 to network with about 90 researchers and vendors, like TriGreen Equipment. Around 1,200 people attended the expo in Birmingham, which the Alabama Farmers Federation's Brian Hardin said he hopes will be an annual event.



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THE CULTIVATOR is published monthly by the Alabama Farmers Federation, a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Correspondence may be addressed to **THE CULTIVATOR**, Marlee Moore - Editor, P.O. Box 11000, Montgomery, AL 36191-0001.

U.S. Feed Grain Exports Could Set Record High

Exports of U.S. feed grains in all forms are up 20 percent year-over-year from September 2016 to June 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exports measured 96.9 million metric tons. With two months left in the marketing year, exports could set a record high.

U.S. ethanol exports reached a high at 1.15 billion gallons, surpassing the 1.09 billion gallons exported in 2011/2012.

U.S. corn exports increased 36 percent to 1.96 billion bushels, exceeding export totals for the last five marketing years.

Corn exports to Japan, the traditional top customer of U.S. corn, are 453 million bushels, up 48 percent compared to last year. This surpasses last year's total with two months remaining.

Corn sales to several countries already outpaced historical sales, including record exports to Saudi Arabia, the highest exports to Taiwan since the 1994/1995 marketing year and the most corn exported to South Korea in the last 10 marketing years.

Judges Evaluate Langleys' Farm Of Distinction



Chris and Elizabeth Langley of Chambers County showed off their cattle and timber Farm of Distinction Aug. 11 for three judges of the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year Award. The Langleys are one of 10 finalists for the award, which will be announced Oct. 17 at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia. From left are Florida cattle rancher Cary Lightsey, the overall winner in 2009; Chris Langley; retired Mississippi Extension weed scientist Charles Snipes; and farmer Thomas Porter Jr. of North Carolina, the overall winner in 2011.