



President's Column

Hank Jones

C&J Ag Consulting

Another year is rapidly wrapping up and it's hot and muggy and sweaty and miserable and sloppy and everything Currier and Ives fled from when etching idyllic Christmas scenes. However, I'm sure it will freeze up and be winter before long, as we all know the weather changes quite often and we just have to get used to it. Many of us just wish the weather would make up its mind and be consistent.

Change is a four letter word for most of us though. We all grow comfortable in our surroundings. I feel almost threatened by the idea of having the security of my familiar environment interrupted. Change at first glance can sometimes seem like an inconvenient and frustrating mountain to climb and conquer. Late this summer I found myself at that spot.

As we all know now, Dr. Rogers Leonard (Roger, to most of us), has accepted an administrative position on campus in Baton Rouge. Roger has for many years been the backbone of row crop entomology in North Louisiana. Over the last two decades, Roger has helped apply IPM concepts that have helped consultants all over Louisiana and even the Mid-South win battles against insect pests plaguing cotton, corn, soybeans, milo, and wheat (and I'm probably leaving some crops out).

For two years I had the privilege of being mentored by Roger while working at the Macon Ridge Research Station. During that time, I learned as much from listening to Roger's phone calls with consultants than I did in the field with him (I had to wait a while in his office most mornings waiting for him to get off the phone with us pesky consultants). Needless to say, I had grown very comfortable having Roger in Winnsboro, ready to answer questions when I called and always, always having an answer for me. He was (is) certainly a leader to me, and I suspect to most all consultants in North Louisiana. He has certainly been an exceptional friend to the consultants' association, always ready to lend his expertise where and when needed. It will certainly be a change seeing someone else in Roger's blue office chair. But with the change that is coming, there is opportunity for consultants to forge a new relationship with a new entomologist that will be here to help us.

And, I look forward to positive changes as Roger takes on his new role as associate vice chancellor for research, as well as associate director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. He will be a great asset to the administration in Baton Rouge.

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas. I've come to realize that being Santa is way more fun than I would have ever imagined...I want to conclude by wishing everyone who reads this a Happy New Year!!!

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Now's the Time to Apply for Membership

If you are interested in joining the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants' Association, a voting member in good standing must first nominate you. Then go to www.laagcon.org and complete a membership application. From the homepage, click on Applications, then the membership category you are applying for (either Full Membership or Other Membership which will give you the choice of Associate or Affiliate), then simply fill in the blanks. This online application will be sent to the Membership Services Committee who will send a recommendation to the Executive Board. The review period is from October 1 to April 1, so now is the time to take action. If you need assistance filling in the application or have questions, please contact Denise Wright at glpblues@bellsouth.net or call 337-945-3694.

Come Join Us at Paragon in February

In 2012, we'll have an exciting new venue for our annual conference. We'll be coming together at Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, LA. I think all will be pleased with the hotel accommodations and meeting space, as well as the excellent program the Program Planning Committee has put together. This conference will be chock full of "take home" information presented by knowledgeable and well-spoken speakers. Two "technology-timely" pre-conference workshops will be offered this year at no charge to the attendees (see brief synopses following...). Please be sure to pre-register for these workshops as seating is limited.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our sustaining members and sponsors for again stepping up to the plate to ensure our annual meeting is top of the line. **Koch Agromonic Services** will sponsor the coffee break during the pre-conference workshops on Wednesday morning. **BASF Corporation** will again sponsor our Wednesday luncheon with technical presentation, **Valent USA Corporation** will sponsor the afternoon refreshment break, and **Bayer Crop-Science** will continue to sponsor our social networking reception held that evening.

On Thursday morning, **Dupont Crop Protection** and **Pioneer Hi-Bred International** will sponsor the breakfast with technical presentation. **Agrilience** and **Syngenta Crop Protection** will sponsor refreshment breaks, with **Monsanto Company** sponsoring the luncheon with technical presentation. **FMC Corporation** will again sponsor the Crop Protection and Production Quiz (Pest ID Contest).

Friday morning's breakfast with technical presentation will be sponsored by **Mahkteshim-Agan**, and the mid-morning refreshment break by **Crop Production Services**. **Dow AgroSciences** will again sponsor one of the \$2,000.00 scholarships which will be presented by DAS representative(s) during the Awards portion of our program on Wednesday afternoon. Many other sustaining members will support our conference in the way of out-of-state guest speaker sponsorship, printing of the final conference program, and other conference expenses.

So, again, a great big "THANK YOU" to all of our sustaining members who continue to come through for our Louisiana consultants! We understand that these are times of "belt tightening" for most, but our sustaining members still see the importance of supporting this conference. The Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference has truly become "the meeting to attend" for the latest in production agriculture, as well as other "must know" information to help grow your business.

So mark your calendars and pre-register for the 2012 LATMC and come join us in Marksville for an educational, networking good time! Hotel reservations can be made by calling **1-800-642-7777** and mentioning the **LACA Annual Conference** and code **LACF08G** to get the discounted group rate.



FieldRecon™ Workshop From a Consultant's Perspective

For the first time LACA will be offering a workshop/tutorial on FieldRecon. FieldRecon is a journal based logging system that many consultants nationwide are using to consult with for their agricultural customers.

The workshop will be moderated by David Hydrick, owner of Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc. in Jonesboro, AR. David is considered a "Power User" of FieldRecon and will offer his expertise on how a consultant can get started and use FieldRecon to make his business more profitable plus how he and his clients benefit from the use of FieldRecon. David Krueger, owner of the software, will participate in the workshop to introduce and demo the brand new IPAD version of FieldRecon. In addition, two other consultants from AR, Lance Ramthun and Sterling Clifton, will go over how they use FieldRecon in their day to day business.

The workshop will cover areas from initial setup, to the concept of how to use FieldRecon, to more in depth options as well. The knowledge you'll gain from attending this workshop will be invaluable. You'll learn the theory on why you should use it and then how to go about it. You'll also see how FieldRecon can help you better organize the different technologies in herbicides and seed varieties.

As an added benefit, Field Rx will be demonstrated in the workshop. Field Rx is a program that writes variable rate Rx files using soil sampling data. Field Rx and FieldRecon work together seamlessly and make grid sampling simple. Grid sampling is another great revenue stream for consultants to add into their business as an offering to their growers.

Whether you are already using FieldRecon or are planning on implementing it, it would be a good idea to go ahead and get the latest release and become familiar with it prior to the workshop. The Premium Version will be used in the workshop examples and training. You can visit www.fieldrecon.com to download the software or updates. Register now for the FieldRecon workshop before it fills up!

Introduction to Social Media for Agricultural Consultants - how and why you can use it efficiently in your business

*Natalie Hummel, Associate Professor, LSU AgCenter
Anna Meszaros, Associate, LSU AgCenter*

Anna Meszaros and I will be leading a workshop on how you can use social media in your agricultural consulting business. The purpose of this session is to expose you to a variety of social media tools (we will primarily focus on Facebook and Twitter) that you can use to communicate with other Ag Consultants, Farmers, Industry Representatives and University Faculty. Technology and communication are quickly changing in all sectors of the economy, including agriculture. If you want to learn about the latest ways to communicate, then this session is for you.

The session will begin with an overview and examples of successful information delivery and communi-

cation facilitated through social media. Next we will discuss strategies to use social media efficiently in your consulting business. The presentations will be designed to be appropriate for a variety of social media users - from those that are not using social media to novice and advanced social media users. There will be plenty of time for hands-on help to show you how to use social media websites for communication and information gathering purposes.

If you will participate in this session as your first entry into social media please create a Facebook or Twitter account before the session and come with a laptop, tablet (e.g. iPad or other such device), or smartphone with wireless access capabilities. This step will speed up the learning process. Otherwise we can help you quickly create an account at the beginning of the session. The conference center will have wireless internet access available for the workshop. If you just want to come and hear what is happening without creating any accounts or bringing a computer you are also welcome. Please contact Natalie Hummel for more information about preparations for this session at nhummel@agcenter.lsu.edu or on twitter @NatHummel.

For those of you who can't attend this year's conference you can follow the action on twitter by using this hashtag #LATMC12. I look forward to an engaging workshop that will expose you to some new ways to interact using social media. If you have suggestions for topics that should be included in the training please shoot me an e-mail, message on Facebook, or contact me on Twitter.



Dr. B. Rogers Leonard

New Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

B. Rogers Leonard, award-winning entomologist, has been named the new associate vice chancellor for research in the LSU AgCenter effective January 1, 2012. He will also have the title of associate director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station.

Dr. Leonard's specialty is insect pest management in cotton, corn, grain sorghum, and soybeans. Over the course of his career, he has helped farmers in Louisiana and across the South save money in production costs and increase yields through more effective pest control methods.

Leonard joined the AgCenter as a researcher in 1990 at the Macon Ridge Research Station in Winnsboro, LA after completing his Ph.D. in entomology at LSU. He was promoted from assistant professor to associate professor in 1994, and then to professor in 1999.

Leonard has been on the graduate faculty of the LSU Department of Entomology in Baton Rouge, where he has overseen the research of dozens of LSU master's and doctoral students.

In 2006, he was named the Jack Hamilton Chair in Cotton Production. This award was created by the Louisiana Cotton Producers Association, the Louisiana Independent Cotton Warehouse Association and the Louisiana Cotton Ginners Association to honor Jack Hamilton, a long-time cotton farmer, now deceased, from Lake Providence, LA.

Leonard's honors include the 2012 Recognition Award from the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America, which was announced in 2011; the LSU AgCenter Doyle Chambers Research Award in 2011; the LSU AgCenter Ken Tipton Team Award in 1998, 2006, and 2011; the National Conservation Systems Cotton Research Award in 2007; and the LSU AgCenter First Mississippi Award for Research in 1998.

In 2009, he was named to the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association Hall of Fame. He has served on the state boll weevil commission and on the technical advisory group for boll weevil eradication.

Leonard received his bachelor's degree in agronomy in 1984 and his master's degree in entomology in 1987, also from LSU. He operated his own agricultural consulting service in and around Tensas Parish from 1982 to 1986.

During his career, he has received more than \$7.4 million in grants and contracts to support his research.

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2012 LATMC Highlights

Not only do we have a new exciting venue for our annual conference, but two, what promise to be, interesting and informative workshops to improve your business and bottom line. Please remember to pre-register for these asap.

The Commissioner of Ag & Forestry will again be with us to reflect on 2011 and take us forward into 2012. Brian Breaux with the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation will tell of changes in the new farm bill. David Bollich with Louis-Dreyfus Grain Elevator will talk about marketing strategies for the coming year.

Jason Griffith with the USGS will present on saltwater in the Mississippi River alluvial aquifer and the effects it's had in NE Louisiana from results of a survey he recently conducted.

New research data related to application timing for control of cercospora leaf blight in soybean will be presented, as well as many other best management production practices by many researchers and specialists from the LSU AgCenter and USDA-ARS, Sugarcane Research Unit.

Kip Balkcom with USDA-ARS will address tillage practices and cover crops in dry weather conditions and heavy (clay) soils. We'll also have a panel of industry representatives talking about specific cotton products with audience participation (Prevathon, Transform, and Liberty Link Cotton are the selected products for this year's Q/A Session).

Our own Blaine Viator who will take office in January as the 2012 President of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) will address our group on Friday morning. You can access the preliminary program and other meeting information at www.laagcon.org.



The Golden Age of Agriculture By Mike Strain, D.V.M. Commissioner, Agriculture & Forestry

According to data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS), "American agriculture continues to be a bright spot in our nation's economy. Following strong numbers last year, we learned that farm income is up again in 2011-- with a 28 percent increase in net income. Our farm exports this year hit a new record high of \$137 billion." Potentially, the United States could hit new records of \$148 to \$150 billion.

This year, the American agricultural sector will have a net positive balance of trade of more than \$43 billion dollars, a significant increase over the record of \$38 billion last year. Agricultural exports will continue to play a major factor in the economy of the future.

Rice, soybeans, cotton, feed grains, feeds and fodder are Louisiana's top agricultural exports. The total value of those exports was \$912.7 million in 2010. Population and economic growth in other countries is expanding at a rapid rate.

It is estimated that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States. World population is projected to increase by 32 percent to 9.2 billion people by the year 2050. In addition, rising personal income in China and India will result in increased consumption of protein and vegetable oil, multiplying demand for grains and oilseeds. The middle class outside the U.S. is expected to double by 2020, to more than one billion households, with real purchasing power greater than \$20,000 per year. America's largest trading partners are China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, the European Union, and South Korea. In addition, more agricultural products are exported from Louisiana than any other state in the nation.

The increased demand for agricultural products is making a real difference for America's farm families, whose household income was up 3 percent in 2010 and is forecast to grow again in 2012. This year, American farmers will surpass the record 2010 profit of \$100 billion, the highest in American history.

In order to maintain this growth, the USDA must continue to support farmers and ranchers with a strong safety net program and expand export markets. Recently, America signed new trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. These new accords should generate an additional \$2.3 billion in exports next year alone for America's farmers and ranchers. The expected increase in exports will help support and create thousands of jobs here at home.

Furthermore, according to ERS, "Innovations in farm organization, business arrangements, and production practices have allowed farmers to produce more with less. Fewer labor hours and less land is used today than 30 years ago, and practices such as the use of biotechnology and conservation tillage have reduced machinery, fuel, and pesticide use. Likely aided by shifts in government

policies and the use of new risk management tools such as contracts and crop insurance, U.S. agricultural productivity has increased by nearly 50 percent since 1982. Future innovations will be necessary to maintain, or boost, current productivity gains in order to meet the growing global demands that will be placed on U.S. agriculture.

Use of two major components, land and labor, has decreased over time. From 1982 to 2007, land used in agriculture dropped from 54 to 51 percent of total U.S. land area, while farming used 30 percent less hired labor and 40 percent less operator labor. Meanwhile, new technologies such as precision agriculture -- often requiring new or advanced management techniques -- have been increasingly adopted by farmers." Worldwide, there will be less available arable land.

Farmers have altered how they manage their risks and are spreading their exposure over a wider set of stakeholders. They are relying more on contracting and the value of production under contract increased roughly 10 percentage points between 1991 and 2007. There has been a shift of production to farms organized as partnerships and corporations from 34 percent of all farm product sales in 1982 to 43 percent by 2007. Federal crop insurance has also become a major risk management tool. In 1989, farmers insured 100 million acres; by 2007, insured acreage was up to 270 million acres.

"Larger farms receive the bulk of commodity payments while most conservation payments accrue to smaller farms. Overall, payments are smaller, yet make up a larger share of gross cash farm income for smaller farms, which often rely heavily on off-farm income. Larger farms receive larger payments that make up a much smaller share of their gross cash farm income. Over the past three decades, government policies have shifted from a concentration on supply management to focus on income support, with a growing emphasis on environmental concerns, most recently via working-land programs."

"Despite declines in the use of land and labor, agricultural productivity has maintained a linear growth pattern. Driven by the increased use of technology, production practices have changed. For example, the use of no-till methods increased from 5 percent of all planted acres in 1989 to 23 percent by 2004, and pesticide use has declined on many crops. Many of these changes have also lowered labor requirements, which have allowed some farms to increase the size of their operations. Although production has shifted dramatically to larger farms over the past 25 years, 97 percent of all farms remain family farms, generating more than 85 percent of the total value of U.S. agricultural production."

All of these positive economic indicators lead us to believe that we are in the "Golden Age" of agriculture. The nation's farmers, and specifically our Louisiana producers, are in an opportune time to realize great profits from their investment. Even more important is the ability to provide ourselves with the world's safest and highest quality food, fiber and energy supply. We can also take advantage of the world's desire for our products and services as we contribute to a more stable global food economy.

Louisiana Young Ag Producers Program (LaYAPP)

LaYAPP is a one-year, intensive classroom and hands-on, mentor-based program that introduces junior and senior high school students to the options available to them in the areas of food and fiber production and encourages them to explore and enter into a profession in agriculture.

Bradley Leger, the LSU AgCenter's LaYAPP program coordinator, says, "This program provides knowledge and resources that will ultimately lead them into entering an area of their choice in an agricultural production enterprise. Candidates must demonstrate a sincere interest in entering the profession, agree to attend the summer institutes held in 2012 and 2013, and complete 50 internship hours with a qualified mentor during the 2012-13 school year."

LSU AgCenter vice chancellor and director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Paul Coreil, sees the program as a great opportunity to get young people interested in careers in agriculture. "The face of agriculture is changing. The number of producers is decreasing, and their average age is increasing, so it is important that we present students with information about careers in production agriculture," said Dr. Coreil. He also pointed out the importance of agriculture and forestry to rural economic development and increased food and fiber demands required to sustain a growing world population. "The demand for food is expected to steadily increase over the next 40 years, which means encouraging career interest in agriculture and forestry is essential to our future," he said.

The 2012 Summer Institute will be held July 23-27 on the LSU-Baton Rouge campus. In addition to the AgCenter, major sponsors of the program include the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

"The program is entering its third year, with the 10 members of the 2011-2012 class currently engaged in internships with their mentors," said Leger. "This group of students has a wide range of production interests, which include beef, rice, vegetable production, horses, swine, crawfish, goats, and specialty crops."

"We had a great pool of highly qualified candidates from which to choose," Leger said. "And, we are confident that these young agriculturists will have a great impact on the future of our state's agricultural industry. We look forward to selecting the members of the incoming class."

Information on the application process can be obtained at www.lsuagcenter.com/layapp. The application deadline is February 1, 2012.

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For information on membership in NAICC
go to www.naicc.org or
contact Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com
or Denise Wright at glpbues@bellsouth.net

Welcome New Members!!!

Promoted from Associate to Voting Membership is Matt Myers, consultant with Agricultural Management Services, Inc.

Joining the LACA as an Associate Member is David Thorpe, Research Associate at Pest Management Enterprises, LLC.

New sustaining members include Bayer Biosciences (Fibermax, HBK, and Stoneville seed division), INTX Microbials, Marrone Bio Innovations, and Ray and Dorothy Young. New in name only, is Koch Agronomic Services, formerly Agrotain International.

Calendar of Events

Beltwide Cotton Conference
Orlando World Center Marriott, Orlando, FL
January 3-6, 2012

**National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants
Annual Meeting**
Peppermill Resort, Reno, NV
January 18-21, 2012

**Southern Weed Science Society
Annual Meeting**
Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, SC
January 23-25, 2012

National Conservation Systems Cotton & Rice Conference
Harrah's Conference Center, Tunica, MS
January 30-February 1, 2012

**Weed Science Society of America
Annual Meeting**
Hilton Hotel Waikoloa Village, Big Island, Hawaii
February 6-9, 2012

**Louisiana Ag Industry Association (LAIA)
Annual Meeting**
Paragon Casino Resort, Marksville, LA
February 8-9, 2012

**Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management
Conference (Consultants' Annual Meeting)**
Paragon Casino Resort, Marksville, LA
February 15-17, 2012

*Wishing Everyone a Healthy, Safe,
Prosperous, Happy New Year, 2012!!!*

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