



# Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association TURNROW TALK

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## President's Column

by Rusty Elston

*Elston Crop Management, Inc., Cheneyville, LA*

Serving this year as president of the LACA has been a rewarding experience for me. I have come to appreciate and respect current and former leadership of the LACA more than ever. Many years of hard work and dedication have made the LACA the respected organization that it is. Be sure to thank members of the LACA that have helped you to develop into the agricultural leader that you are.

Agriculture is and will always be the backbone of America. No other country can produce the quantity or quality of food and fiber that America produces. As our population increases and demands change, crop consultants will become an even more important and essential role player in agriculture. We must continue in our education to provide the future needs of our employees, the farmer and the consumer. The LACA is dedicated to the education of its members as well as many others. I encourage you to serve in the LACA, or to become a member of the LACA. Together we will meet the challenges of the days ahead.

The year 2008 has been an interesting year. This year provided the many challenges that every year provides. Many of the challenges that were met seemed impossible. The lessons learned will be invaluable in the years ahead. The hurricanes caused immeasurable losses that will take quite some time to overcome by many, but farmers are farmers, they will survive. In my book they are heroes. I encourage everyone to read in your Bible the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and the first two verses in chapter twelve of Hebrews. In this scripture the writer speaks of faith and the faith that men and women of old lived in order to accomplish the will of God in their lives. Without this faith, they never would have been successful. You and I must also live this life of faith; it's a necessary requirement to be successful.

Next year will be very challenging. I look forward to it although I am ready for the winter break. I will pray for you; please pray for me and our farmers. God bless you!

### Meet Us in Alexandria for the '09 LATMC

It's once again time to gather for our annual consultants' meeting, the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference. The conference will be held at the SAI Convention Centre with host hotel, Baymont Inn & Suites right next door. Some of you may remember years past when we met at the same location in the old Louisiana Convention Center with the Hampton Inn as our host hotel. The convention center and hotel have been totally remodeled and are under new management. The convention center boasts modern "state of the art" audio and visual amenities, plenty of meeting space, and I think you'll be very impressed with the new face the hotel

has taken on.

Highlights of the conference, to name a few, will be a panel discussion featuring well-known cotton experts on the future of cotton and where we'll be five years from now regarding infrastructure and landscape changes as cotton acreage declines. Governor Bobby Jindal has been invited to address our group on the 2008 disasters and what kind of assistance the agricultural community can expect. Mike Strain, DVM, Commissioner of Agriculture will also offer his reflections on 2008 and perspectives for 2009. This year there will be a Multi-Crop Management Session which will feature an array of "take-home" information on best management practices for various row crops. I can assure you that the most knowledgeable speakers have been sought after for these presentations. Having said that, let me take the opportunity to thank those sustaining member companies that have committed to sponsoring the out-of-state guest speakers. We could not continue to offer the quality meeting we do were it not for the generosity of our sustaining members. Included in these out-of-state guest speakers are Angus Cachot, Erick Larson, Will McCarty, Joe Townsend, Dennis Berglund, M.O. Way, Steve Phillips and Brian Ottis. As usual, there will be the crop specific breakout sessions, as well as a general session where presentations on grain crops will be given. Another highlight of the '09 meeting will be a wildlife presentation on the Louisiana Black Bear and the impact it has on agriculture. I can assure you that attending the '09 meeting will be beneficial to you and your business.

Just prior to, but not part of the LATMC conference, will be a Crop Symptomology Symposium featuring soybeans and sugarcane. Dr. Roger Leonard of the LSU AgCenter has lined up speakers and prepared binders for this workshop. If you attended the '08 symposium on grain crops (wheat, field corn, and grain sorghum), please bring your binder received there with you for the '09 workshop since there will be an additional charge besides the symposium registration fee if another binder has to be issued to you. This symposium received rave reviews in '08 and we expect it to be as popular in '09. This workshop is not required for recertification.

As a reminder to those who wish to recertify their consultant or commercial applicator license, LDAF does require that you attend all three days of the meeting, from 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11th to Friday, Feb. 13th at 12:00 noon.

**NOTEWORTHY NEWS**

Longstanding and dedicated to agriculture LACA member, Harold Lambert, was recently named Ag Alumnus of the Year by the LSU College of Agriculture Alumni Association. Congratulations, Harold on this well-deserved honor and recognition!!!

If you have any questions about recertification, please direct these to Marty Pousson, [marty\\_p@ldaf.state.la.us](mailto:marty_p@ldaf.state.la.us).

On behalf of the LACA Executive Board, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, Prosperous New Year!!! Hope to see you in February at the '09 Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference!!!

### **Working With Consultants as Soybean Specialist**

*Ronnie Levy, Ph.D., LSU AgCenter  
Assistant Professor - Extension Specialist*

The specialist's role is to coordinate and/or participate in statewide educational programs throughout the year. Such programs range from small meetings with very few farmers in attendance to statewide or multi-state educational conferences with hundreds in attendance. The programs are diverse, including school classrooms, hotel conference centers, public auditoriums, research centers, cooperating private farms, restaurants, Parish Extension offices, and agri-industry facilities. Parish Extension staff historically have organized many of these meetings, but in recent years meeting organizers are just as often non-university agricultural entities. Examples of the latter group include high school agricultural teachers, local agricultural supply dealers, private seed and other companies, and state agricultural organizations.

Developing and maintaining a good rapport between university and non-university agriculture of interests is critical. Fortunately, the LSU AgCenter is well-respected throughout the state and region. Just as importantly, I have a great deal of respect for the non-university agricultural professionals that I interact with in my educational programs. An important component of my Extension program is simply serving as a source of information for crop production. Through telephone calls, letters, and electronic mail; a large portion of my time during the growing season is devoted to responding to inquiries about current crop conditions and identifying issues that are important to the agricultural industry. These inquiries originate from a diverse group of individuals, including county Extension staff, news media, farmers, private crop consultants, agri-industry personnel, and the general public.

During the growing season, I plan to travel extensively throughout the state troubleshooting crop problems in farmers' fields and offering advice on managing or correcting the problem. The causes of crop problems are varied and usually are the result of several factors. My role, as an Extension specialist, is to provide unbiased opinions and advice on such issues. Usually the Parish Extension agent, private crop consultant, and/or agri-industry representative are involved in determining the problem. With everyone present, we can often help these producers avoid similar problems in the future. Troubleshooting problems not only solve current problems for the farmer and his suppliers, but also helps me to keep up with current production problems. Using current knowledge, we can usually develop information that immediately addresses similar problems for other farmers and industry. Additionally, feedback from the field can provide the impetus for developing new research projects at the LSU AgCenter. An important component of any Extension education program is the availability of basic and applied agricultural research that addresses issues important to the producers.

The success of Extension programs is communicating information and technology to the agricultural sector. The goal of any technology should be to efficiently and quickly transfer information and knowledge to the end user. The development and use of Extension publications and fact-sheets has been a traditional means of communicating information and knowledge to farmers for many years. Written by the Extension specialist and published by the university, these information pieces are made available through the county Extension offices or directly by mail. All of the Extension publications and newsletters are also available over the Internet. This provides a wonderful opportunity to quickly provide information to the industry. One important factor in working with you, the consultants, is to develop trust and respect. I will work hard to merit your trust and respect. We both have the well-being of producer and the agricultural industry as our goal.

In summary, the role of Extension educator is to serve as an unbiased source of information to the agricultural sector. This information is developed through the countless hours of quality research conducted by the LSU AgCenter and surrounding states. My role is to make it available to you.

Feel free to come by and visit me or call me to visit you. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming season.

### **Opinions of a New Scientist: We Must Cooperate!**

*Dr. Daniel Stephenson, LSU AgCenter  
Weed Scientist/Specialist*

In May 2008 I began my tenure as the weed scientist with the LSU AgCenter located at the Dean Lee Research and Extension Center in Alexandria. Prior to May 2008, I worked for the Universities of Arkansas and Florida and Auburn University, either as a scientist or graduate assistant. However, my work experience with these universities did not completely shape my view of agriculture. I was raised on a cattle, cotton, and peanut farm in southeast Alabama. I have helped cows deliver calves, scouted for insects in cotton, plowed the soil, and every other task you have all had the privilege of performing. I have shared in the rewards of a good harvest and watched my family struggle in poor years. All this is said to demonstrate that I have an understanding of what producers and consultants face year after year and I use my past experiences to help shape my research/extension program.

A former colleague once said that planting cotton is one of the greatest urges known to man. Well, if planting cotton or any other crop is a great urge, then worrying about weeds in that crop creates just as much urgency. Planning a pest management system for the coming growing season typically begins with possible weed control strategies in mind. Which herbicide tolerant crop variety should be planted? Should a residual herbicide be budgeted? Can a herbicide be tank-mixed with a fungicide or insecticide to save a trip across the field? These questions, upon many others, are asked by producers and their consultants each year. Some decisions are easy, but others are quite difficult. In light of the current economy and losses due to hurricanes in 2008, I believe more thorough planning will be even more crucial in the future to ensure an economic return.

One of the first lessons I learned upon my arrival in Louisiana was the tremendous importance and influence of consultants. In other words, my recommendation may be

implemented on numerous acres spread across multiple producers, so if I was wrong, my error would be amplified. I welcome this opportunity because I can learn from a consultant just as much as they can learn from me. The chance that I am offered to discuss possible weed management strategies with consultants is very valuable because it allows me to determine research needs and/or refine recommendations in specific situations.

Consultants and agricultural scientists share a common goal. We both desire for our clientele (a.k.a. producers) to be as successful as possible with their crops. Of course this success is usually identified as increased crop yields, but I feel that the definition of success can be broadened. If we are able to learn a new pest management technique or crop production strategy due to a treatment failure or less than desired results, then we will be able to advise producers to not make the same mistake in subsequent years. This desire to continually refine our crop management systems is very important. Weed control is not as easy as it was perceived in the past. The days of spraying only glyphosate are over. The problems with weed resistance identified in Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee have highlighted the disastrous effects if only glyphosate is relied upon. We (LSU AgCenter personnel and consultants) have to advise our stakeholders to use other herbicides to control weeds. This is essential not just to stave off resistance, but to provide season-long control of weeds. Ultimately, we need to take steps to preserve glyphosate-tolerant technologies. Thankfully, I have witnessed this desire among Louisiana consultants I have met and worked with since I began working with the LSU AgCenter.

Looking to the future of agriculture in Louisiana as a specialist with the LSU AgCenter, I am encouraged and excited about the chance to cooperate with consultants. Our cooperation can and will promote crop production practices that enables producers to succeed. Management strategies for weeds will continue to evolve, but our teamwork will help provide recommendations for their control and assist Louisiana crop producers to be profitable.

### **LACA, OUR ASSOCIATION; WE CAN BE PROUD!!!**

*by Roger Carter, LACA Secretary*

Seems like only yesterday that I was asked if I would agree to my name being considered for Secretary of LACA. But that was almost six years ago. And my how LACA has changed.

The Louisiana Agricultural Technology and Management Conference sponsored by LACA is considered the premier multidisciplinary, multi-crop meeting in the Mid-South by those who have attended such meetings in other states. It is a full 2.5 days long when considering the training symposiums which occur on the morning of LATMC's first day of events. LATMC has convenient break-out sessions and is strongly supported by LACA industry sponsors. LACA's meeting a decade ago consisted of primarily 1.5 days of often boring topics with sometimes boring speakers. If nothing else, LACA recently has been guilty of inviting informative and controversial speakers.....who make you think.

The thought process in LACA less than a decade ago was to get in, get certified, and get out. There was little thought to attracting outside speakers, unique speakers. And some few spoke out about returning to a 1 - 1.5 day "party" a few days after the new 2-2.5 day meeting began. I remember commenting to Bobby Simoneaux after

he warned me to get into the session or I would not be certified that I was learning more in the latrine than I was sitting in on some of the sessions. Thankfully the majority wanted the education that the new format offered. And they wanted outside speakers. And they wanted some information on unique subjects such as controlling feral hogs, management of deer food plots, management of quail food plots, etc. Therefore, the journey of LATMC and LACA continues.

We also had a new Executive Director come on board a year into my tenure. Anyone ever having dealt with Denise Wright knows she won't take "No!" for an answer. But she can say "No!" to folks and make them like it. And where she gets the hours in a day to do all she does defies imagination. I know of no one who can turn out the classy work that Denise does. And no one individual has done more to put LACA on the map than Denise.

I've served under six LACA Presidents including Randy Machovec, Dwayne Coulon, Blaine Viator, Bryant Williams, Chad Nelson, and Rusty Elston. Each brought their own personalities to the office and to LACA. I adjusted best I could to each personality, but to a couple it was not adequate for awhile. But the personalities eventually melted together for the benefit of LACA and we are all close friends today. Without these six great leaders (and Denise's expertise) your LACA would be no more significant than one stomate in a cotton field in late July.

Almost dead in the water, the Louisiana Agricultural Hall of Fame was revived and we have had numerous worthy inductees the past several years. And the LACA County Agent Award was initiated and several agents have been recipients. There is no rule that LACA give so many of these awards each year, but usually there is someone so deserving at least every other year.

The LACA Executive Board and Governmental Affairs Committee meet each year with the LSU AgCenter administration. This usually takes place in Baton Rouge in March. In late September or in October, LACA meets with LSU researchers of each crop to discuss research needs, questions, etc. This is called the Fall Retreat. The LACA Executive Board will also try to meet annually with the Commissioner of Agriculture to communicate how LACA can be used as a resource for many items the Commissioner may have under consideration.

LACA has changed venues for LATMC several times and will once again change this year. These changes are inevitable given the management and ownership changes in hotels and conference centers. Although other cities have been mentioned, Alexandria is the most centrally located for our ag folks in the state and seems the place we continue to flock to in February.

Many of you who know me know the passion I feel for LACA. It is our professional organization for our state's consultants just as NAICC is our professional organization for consultants throughout the U.S. and abroad. And both represent us well. But they only do it because of the dedication of folks like the ones I mentioned above. And it takes their time, some of their money, and a lot of their thoughts to keep LACA where it is. I am very proud to have been along for the ride the past six years. It has been an honor and a privilege to have been up close and personal with each President and the many other Executive Board members as they lead LACA to where it is today. What a ride!!!

## Letter from NAICC

Following is a letter that was sent to the LACA Membership last month. I thought it appropriate to share with all of our readers...

The National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) annual meeting will be held January 28-31, 2009 at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, TN. This is the premier gathering of independent crop consultants and contract researchers from the U.S. and Canada, and in recent years we have welcomed international consultant members from the United Kingdom, and Australia, as well as other places abroad. The NAICC Annual Meeting is the only national event tailored directly to the needs of independent crop consultants and contract researchers. The program is structured to serve your professional needs. The communication that takes place between sessions and after hours is the most important exchange crop consultants and contract researchers have access to all year. It is available nowhere else. As a member of your state agricultural association, I'm sure you already know the importance of exchanging ideas with others that share your profession for the benefit of your clients.

I wish to extend to you this special invitation to attend the Annual Meeting in Memphis. If you've been to one of our meetings, then you know it's worth your time and effort, and if you haven't attended in the past, there is no better time, especially considering the close proximity to your home state. The networking opportunities are never-ending, and this meeting will be packed full of information that you can take home to help make your consulting and/or contract research business the absolute best it can be! Once you've tasted what NAICC has to offer in attending the Annual Meeting, you are guaranteed to want to return each year.

Joining NAICC as an individual member is also one of the best ways to promote your business. A special discount of over 50% off the registration fee (\$200 plus all meals free) is being offered to those joining NAICC prior to the Annual Meeting in 2009. Please go to [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org) to view the Annual Meeting Program and to read more about membership in NAICC and other facets of the Alliance. I can assure you, the benefits of attending the Annual Meeting, as well as joining NAICC as a member, far outweigh the efforts taken. I hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

*Allison Jones*

Allison Jones  
Executive Vice President  
National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants



For information on membership in NAICC  
go to [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org) or  
contact Allison Jones at [JonesNAICC@aol.com](mailto:JonesNAICC@aol.com)  
or Denise Wright at [glpbues@bellsouth.net](mailto:glpbues@bellsouth.net)

### Welcome New Members!!!

Moving to Voting Membership in LACA is Joshua Price  
of Price Ag Consulting (reinstated).

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Joining LACA as a new Affiliate Member is Steve  
Micinski of the LSU AgCenter,

### 2008 LACA Executive Board

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**Mark Your Calendars for the 2009  
LACA Sponsored  
Louisiana Agricultural Technology &  
Management Conference  
February 11-13, 2009**

For information on membership in  
LACA, call Denise Wright at 337-945-  
3694 or email [glpbues@bellsouth.net](mailto:glpbues@bellsouth.net)

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