Spring has finally arrived (and by the time you read this newsletter, summer will be upon us)! We have had a cold winter and a very cool-wet spring here in the sugarcane belt. The weather has calmed down now, the pecan trees are sprouting, and land has begun to dry up. Winter is over. There is a frenzy of activity in the fields now with growers trying to get their fields cultivated and sprayed. We are off to a slow start with this 2014 crop. Sugar prices have fallen. Many growers are concerned about profit margins. American sugar producers have asked the U.S. government to file petitions against Mexico's sugar industry for dumping subsidized sugar onto the U.S. market. This excess sugar has been affecting domestic prices. Petitions were filed on March 28, 2014 with the U.S. International Trade Commission and U.S. Department of Commerce said the American Sugar Alliance. We are hoping this action will bring the market back to fair and balanced.

I have been around farms all my life. As a teenager, I would work with my farther repairing equipment for many local farm operations. He was an excellent mechanic. He has since retired. Many people tell me, “your dad sure knows how to swing a wrench”. Though I didn’t mind diesel mechanic work, my passion was for agriculture. I attended Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La and acquired a Bachelor’s degree in Life Sciences and Technologies in 2001. Sadly this program is no longer offered on the Nicholls campus. While attending school, I worked as a field scout for Dr. Henry Long beginning in year 1996. If you’d like to find out more about how I got started in consulting, read Henry Long’s book “Anxiety, Insects, Sugar Cane and Old Age”. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Long and his group for their mentorship. I also thank Dr. Calvin Viator and his associates for the support they have given me along the way. Crop consulting is not my only occupation. I have been employed by the USDA Sugarcane Research Laboratory in Houma, La since year 2000, working in the entomology department under Dr. William White. I have learned a great deal form the researchers here. I enjoy the research and fortunately I can supplement my income by doing something I truly have a passion for, consulting.

I am excited to see a new-younger generation of crop consultants entering our field. I think it is important to respect the older consultants and reflect upon how they got started and their hard work and dedication to the profession. They are the pillars on which LACA stands on. We should always keep in mind the discoveries they have made while also embracing new technology that is steering agriculture into the future. We must always consider research done by the LSU AgCenter and USDA and their recommendations, though most of our decisions will still be based on our experience, intuition and history of the farm. We are the eyes and ears of the agricultural industry. We are the troops on the ground that will most likely come upon new problems before anyone else. It will remain important for us as consultants to notice new incidences and encourage research to be done so that we can make informed IPM decisions for our clients.

I am most honored to serve as president of the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association for 2014. I will do my very best to keep this organization strong and vibrant. I encourage active members to remain active and stress importance to those who are not active to become active. I thank all of our past presidents for their service and look forward to working with our new board members. Stay safe, keep your eyes peeled, and God Bless.

Sincerely,
Randy Richard
2014 LACA President

Welcome New Members!!!

Lucas Pitre transitioned from Associate to Voting status.
Trey Price and Charles McCown joined the Association as Affiliate members.
Armor Seed, Brandt Consolidated, Mycogen, Phytogen, and Sanders, Inc. joined LACA as Sustaining members.
I begin my morning radio show each day with this statement emphasizing the bright future ahead for Louisiana and American agriculture.

According to the LSU AgCenter, for the second year in a row, Louisiana farmers had record-breaking values for many of their commodities, which led to a new high value of $11.8 billion for Louisiana’s agricultural sector in 2013 – up 3.8 percent from 2012. Over the past 5 years, we have experienced a total growth of over 42 percent.

In addition to strong prices, many commodities saw record yields, such as: cotton - 1,221 pounds per acre; corn 186 bushels per acre; sweet potatoes 481 bushels per acre; and rice 7,600 pounds per acre.

The beef cattle industry saw the highest prices in many years up 18 percent from 2012 with a value in excess of $663 million.

Forestry, our largest plant crop, improved slightly from 2012 to $2.88 billion.

Further, the 2012 Census of Agriculture has just been released showing the following key data for Louisiana:

The land in farms dropped by 2.6 percent to 7,900,864 acres while the number of farms dropped by 6.7 percent to 28,093 with an average farm being 281 acres.

In addition, we are aging. In the last 5 years, the average age of the American farmer has risen from 57.1 to 58.5 years of age. Ten years ago the average age was 55.3 years of age and thirty five years ago it was just 50.3 years of age. What do these figures tell us? Fewer and fewer young people are choosing to farm.

On a positive note, this year, the United States had a record $141 billion in agricultural exports with Louisiana contributing more than $15.75 billion in commodities and products.

In many major publications, including the Wall Street Journal, and the next five National Geographic issues beginning April 2014, there is a growing focus on both food availability as well as future sustainability.

Our pathway to the future is clear. It is imperative that we double and wherever possible triple production of food and fiber with less inputs per unit. Growing worldwide demand is driving prices and affecting the availability of seeds and other critical inputs. In order to do increase production and decrease inputs, we must collectively lean forward and embrace new methods and technologies as well as tried and true methods like selective breeding and established scientific protocols.

Each day, we are challenged and often criticized for embracing such technologies as genetic modification or the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. We must openly defend and utilize all emerging science and technology that is productive and safe in order to meet these future demands and garner the benefits of our labor for this and future generations.

Additionally, we must actively engage the legislative process both in the State Capitol and in Washington D.C. There are many groups struggling to be heard, and it is critical that our voice be recognized as one of progressive reasoning and sound advice.

We have a unique opportunity in that the world needs more food in the next 35 years than has been produced since the dawn of time. We are in the driver’s seat, and as such we must drive the train and command the direction forward.

Mike Strain, DVM
Commissioner, LDAF

Consulting Survey
(for members only)

If you haven’t completed the survey yet, please click on the link below or copy it to your browser. This is for LACA’s information only...results will be reported in the winter issue newsletter.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6RSJ3PD

Ray and Dorothy Young
Endowed Assistantship

Tax-deductible contributions to the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Louisiana Row Crop IPM are encouraged and appreciated. Checks must be made payable to LSU Foundation with check memo indicating “Young Endowed Assistantship”. Please mail checks to:

Denise Wright, Executive Director
Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association
P.O. Box 104
Morrow, LA 71356

Not only is this a tribute to two outstanding leaders, it’s a very worthwhile investment in agriculture’s future...Please consider sending your contribution today!
TO: LACA Membership and friends of Ray and Dorothy Young

In 2011, the LACA announced the “Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Louisiana Row Crop Integrated Pest Management”. This award will be used to fully support an outstanding student pursuing a graduate education in the plant protection disciplines (Entomology, Plant Pathology, Weed Science) at Louisiana State University. This award recognizes Mr. Ray’s professional contributions and service to the agricultural industries he has worked tirelessly to support during his 40+ years as an agricultural consultant. The lives of many people, especially colleagues who served as agricultural consultants, farmers, university faculty, industry representatives, and crop scouts, were enriched by having the privilege of knowing and working with Mr. Ray Young.

The LACA made the initial donation to formalize a LSU Foundation Account with the LSU College of Agriculture and has continued to support the Account with annual contributions. Due to generous contributions from the LACA, Agricultural Industries and the many colleagues who were personally touched by this true Southern gentleman and his wife, the Foundation Account is approaching the pledged endowment of $300,000. We are asking LACA members to consider an individual donation and to make an effort to contact farmers or other Representatives of the Agricultural industries to support this goal. Brochure attached to this email and also available on the LACA website at www.laca1.org.

During 2013 and 2104, the LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture sponsored this Assistantship to promote the importance of such support to students. Ms. Rebecca Melanson and Ms. Rebecca Sweany, plant pathology students, were recipients of this award. Many of you heard Ms. Melanson deliver a presentation at the 2014 LATMC conference and can attest to the quality of the awardee. This award will continue to provide assistance to students who will eventually support Agricultural Consulting Services.

We appreciate all those who have worked to make this assistantship a reality and look forward with anticipation to meeting our target goal.

Sincerely,

Randy Richard, 2014 LACA President
2014 LACA Executive Board Members

Excerpt from Letter of Application
Rebecca Sweany

Please consider me for the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Integrated Pest Management. You will find that I have experience in different aspects of integrated pest management to qualify me for this assistantship. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at LSU. My career goal is to become a research plant pathologist whose focus is developing novel management strategies against plant pathogens and pests of row crops which also mitigate environmental damage. In the following letter, I will demonstrate why I am an ideal recipient for this assistantship.

My previous field research focused on non-chemical management (pre and post-harvest of several important plant pathogens to crops in Louisiana and qualifies me for this assistantship. In 2003, I started as a research associate in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at the LSU AgCenter. In Dr. Damann’s lab, we demonstrated the successful colonization of corn and aflatoxin reduction by a commercially available biocontrol atoxigenic strain of Aspergillus flavus in fields in Louisiana. We also showed enhanced efficacy when the commercial strain was paired with native biocontrol strains which we identified. In 2007, I began research for a master’s degree in Plant Pathology at LSU, where I demonstrated increased ability of some strains of A. flavus to infect corn. Additionally, I showed a preponderance of atoxigenic strains of A. flavus in the corn, providing evidence for natural biocontrol in Louisiana and an explanation for the lack of aflatoxin contamination events in years when the conditions were conducive for severe outbreaks.

I worked at LSU AgCenter in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology as a research associate on a project to develop hot-water treatments to control Rhizopus soft rot of sweet potatoes. I also assisted in field assessments of sweet potato cultivar resistance to Fusarium wilt, Streptomyces root rot, Charcoal rot and Rhizopus soft rot. Finally my upcoming doctoral research on understanding the mechanism and genes involved in the inhibition of aflatoxin production by biocontrol strains will be valuable in controlling aflatoxin contamination in corn. My findings may lead to the development of a biochemical signal to suppress aflatoxin production or a transgenic line of corn with a novel form of genetic resistance to aflatoxin contamination.

I am also qualified based on my leadership in the Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology Graduate Student Association, attendance of meetings in my professional societies and commodity groups, presentations and publications of important research findings, especially as they relate to integrated management of plant pathogens in field crops.

I have highlighted why I am the ideal recipient for the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Crop Integrated Pest Management. I have participated in field-based research focusing on non-chemical management of important plant pathogens on both corn and sweet potatoes and my doctoral research will continue this trajectory. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sweany
The College of Ag Alumni Association recently held its Spring Awards & Honors Ceremony. Roger Carter was honored with the Outstanding Alumni Award. Shown below (top) Dr. Donnie Miller, President of the LSU College of Agriculture Alumni Association and Consultant, Roger Carter. Graduate student, Rebecca Sweany received the 2nd Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship. Shown below (bottom), Dorothy Young, Rebecca Sweany, Ray Young and Vice President for Agriculture and Dean of the College of Agriculture, Dr. Bill Richardson.

2014 LACA Scholarships Awarded

The recipient of the LACA Undergraduate Scholarship is Ms. Brittany Doise of Elton, LA. Raised on a family farm, Brittany is an Ag Business major (3.7 GPA) at LSU Baton Rouge. She is on the Dean’s List and an Ambassador for the LSU College of Agriculture. A graduate of Elton High School, Brittany was student of the year and valedictorian. Brittany was a leader in many 4-H & FFA programs, having participated in the national 4-H Congress, the national FFA Convention, and the Presidential Classroom in Washington DC. Brittany was very active in her community as a Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentor and a role model in the Jeff Davis Parish Drug Abuse and Resistance Program. She was also a Vacation Bible School Teacher for the United Methodist Church.

At LSU, Brittany is currently a student worker in the Office of Dean of the College of Agriculture. She is a member of the National Honor Society of Collegiate Scholars & Gamma Sigma Delta—Honor Society of Agriculture. She has been selected as a participant in both the Agriculture Council of America and National 4-H Council’s National Ag Day on Capitol Hill. Also a member of the Undergraduate Quiz Bowl Team in the Agricultural and Applied Economics Annual Meeting in Washington, DC., Brittany has represented LSU as a member of the team participating in the National Grocer’s Association Case Study Competition in Las Vegas.

Brittany is currently a mentor for freshmen students living in the LSU’s Agriculture Residence College. She has received several scholarships in Ag Business and she has held summer internships at Progressive Tractor Co. & the City of Lake Charles Civic Center. In addition, she assisted Case International with teaching farmers new GPS software in combines.

Right: Brittany Doise, recipient of the 2014 LACA Undergraduate Scholarship.

Left to right, Dwayne Coulon, 2013 LACA President with Cullen Minter, Dorothy Young, and Ray Young, co-sponsors of the 2014 undergraduate scholarship.
Mr. Fei Yang was awarded a graduate (doctoral) scholarship for 2014 that is sponsored by the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association and funded by Dow AgroSciences. Mr. Yang received both his Bachelor of Science Degree in Ecology and Master of Science in Agricultural Insect and Pest Control from Yangzhou University in Yangzhou, China. The molecular biological analysis of Liriomyza and the rapid molecular identification of invasive species via mitochondrial DNA were the subjects of his masters research.

As a research assistant, Mr. Yang interned in the Agricultural Products Safety Test Center where he conducted analyses for pesticide residues in rice, vegetables, and water and heavy metal residues in water and soil.

Mr. Yang twice received the Award of Excellence Undergraduate Student Scholarship and the Excellent Graduate Student Scholarship. In addition, he has authored or co-authored 10 publications in peer reviewed journals and given five oral presentations and 15 poster presentations at entomological meetings where he won several awards for his research.

Fei is a member of the Entomological Society of America; the Overseas Chinese Entomological Association and the LSU Entomology Club. He currently serves on the Courses and Curriculum Committee in the LSU Dept of Entomology.

Mr. Yang is a PhD student in the LSU Department of Entomology and has been described as an extremely intelligent individual and an exceptional hard worker. He is just as comfortable counting and tracking insects in a corn field as he is working with mitochondrial DNA in the laboratory.

The 2014 recipient of the Louisiana Land Bank funded graduate (doctoral) scholarship sponsored by the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association is Mr. Sebastian Albu. Born in Bucharest, Romania, he graduated from high school in Charleston, West Virginia and received bachelor degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and Metropolitan State University. Trained as a jazz guitarist & pianist, Mr. Albu is an accomplished musician and composer. He has traveled extensively throughout Europe, South America and Asia, and is fluent in English, Romanian, Spanish, and French. Currently, Sebastian is studying Chinese while he and his wife develop an English language education program to teach English to Chinese children.

In 2012, Mr. Albu received his Master of Science degree from LSU in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology. His research concentrated on mycological systematics. Developing an interest in plant pathology, Sebastian decided to pursue a PhD and to continue his studies at LSU. His current research, under Dr. Ray Schneider, is on the etiology of Cercospora leaf blight and purple seed stain in soybeans. Both genetic and computational techniques are used to study representative isolates and extant populations. The data being generated is contributing to the development of new Cercospora resistant soybean lines. To date, the majority of Mr. Albu’s research has been lab based but a large field component is planned for this year. This research is funded by a grant from the United Soybean Board.

To date, Mr. Albu has authored or co-authored 9 publications. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, the American Phytopathological Society, the Mycological Society of America and the Graduate School Association.
Consultant Certification Requirements

Recently, I have received a few questions about agriculture consultants wanting to add categories to their certification. Although each of you has been through the process to hold your current licenses, you must undergo the process again in order to add another category.

When applying for an agricultural consultant’s certification, all minimum requirements must be met, and the proper documentation must be submitted along with the application. A completed application form, documentation of experience, and a copy of an official college transcript must be submitted. LDAF destroys this documentation after the application process is completed. If a current agricultural consultant would like to add onto their certification, they will have to submit a new, completed application to take additional Agricultural Consultant certification exams.

It is a Louisiana state requirement that in order to become a certified Agricultural Consultant, applicants must receive approval for testing through the Advisory Commission on Pesticides (ACP) and pass certification examination(s) administered by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF).

There are currently four categories in which an applicant can apply for testing. Those categories include:

- Control of insects, mites, nematodes, or other invertebrates
- Control of weeds
- Control of plant pathogens
- Soil management

Under each of these categories, there are specific areas in which an applicant can test to better specify where they would like to consult. For example, under control of weeds, a consultant would test in Subcategory 3a: Agricultural Weed Control, or if they were working in aquatic weed control, then they would need Subcategory 3e: Aquatic Weed Control. A complete list of subcategories can be found on LDAF’s agricultural consultant application testing form.

In order to be eligible to take a consultant examination, an applicant must apply for approval. Applications for approval can be obtained from LDAF. All applicants for an agricultural consultant’s certification must furnish all of the following to ensure they meet the minimum requirements:

- Hold a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree from an accredited college or university
- Has earned at least 30 semester hours of college credit in agronomy, soil science, weed science, entomology, plant pathology, horticulture, plant physiology, or other biological science, or a combination of such
- Has at least four hours of college credit in each discipline area that the applicant would like to test (These include entomology, plant pathology, weed science, and soil science.)

With a master’s or doctoral degree, the applicant must have at least one crop season of experience. With a bachelor’s degree, the applicant must have two crop seasons of experience while under the employment of a certified agricultural consultant in the area that he or she is requesting certification.

An applicant’s experience must be documented and notarized as proof of experience. This requirement may be waived for applications that have a master’s or doctoral degree, have been employed by an agricultural consultant, or demonstrate other comparable experience.

For more information about the certification process please contact the LSU AgCenter or LDAF.

Kim Pope
LSU AgCenter
Pesticide Safety Education Coordinator
kpope@agcenter.lsu.edu

Recruitment Efforts in the LSU College of Agriculture

Who should be interested in the future of agriculture? Anyone who wears clothes, eats food, and lives in a house. The U.S. Department of Labor and USDA report that expected growth for employment of graduates in most agriculture-related fields will increase 5% over the next 5 years. This coupled with a 10% decline in the number of students choosing agriculture as a career path places the future of agriculture in jeopardy. LSU is not alone in experiencing a decline over the years in the interest in agricultural degree programs.

The reorganization in the LSU AgCenter and the College of Agriculture in 2013 resulted in Dr. Bill Richardson being named Vice President for Agriculture and Dean of the College of Agriculture. This change has strengthened the relationship between teaching and research and Dr. Richardson has placed recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students as a high priority. Recruiting undergraduates can be difficult because the public in many cases still see agriculture as cows, plows, and sows and are unaware of the incredible technological changes that have occurred. The future of agriculture is exciting and employment opportunities will continue to increase. What could be a more noble profession than to play a role in helping to produce safe, abundant, and economical food, fiber, and forestry products, while at the same time protecting our environment?

Mary Claire Gilder (maryclaire@lsu.edu) is currently responsible for undergraduate recruitment for the LSU College of Agriculture. Mary Claire has taken every opportunity to speak to young people and to promote awareness of agricultural degree programs available at LSU. She has worked especially hard to recruit high school students involved in 4-H and FFA. According to Mary Claire, “There are lots of ways to practice agriculture. It’s much more than farming. It’s nutrition, education, business, apparel design, wetlands studies, resource conservation and much, much more. The backbone of today’s agriculture is science, technology and business.”
The College of Agriculture is also looking at other ways to attract undergraduates such as the 2 + 2 programs at community colleges where students spend two years at a community college followed by two years at LSU to complete their agriculture degree program.

I am currently responsible for graduate student recruitment for the College of Agriculture. A report from the Coalition for a Sustainable Agricultural Workforce (CSAW) representing six of the largest agricultural chemical companies states that they will need to hire more than 1,000 scientist-level people between now and 2015. These new hires will represent 13% of the current U.S. agricultural scientist workforce. It is predicted that 84% of the total need will be in plant sciences, plant breeding/genetics, and plant protection disciplines. There will also be a need for scientist-level positions in university, government, and private business. To encourage graduate student recruitment, Dr. Richardson has agreed to provide funding to support Ph.D. assistantships in agriculture. Stipends for these assistantships will be very competitive with other universities and will allow us to attract the best of the best.

Graduate student recruitment efforts are also reaching out to undergraduates in non-agriculture degree programs at LSU and at other state universities. Through the efforts of Dr. John Russin, LSU-Alexandria will now offer an agriculture concentration in Biology. It is hoped that teaching of agriculture courses at LSU-Alexandria will stimulate interest and provide a means for graduate student recruitment. This same concept is also being discussed with other universities in the state.

Many of you reading this article are on the front lines when it comes to contacts with the public. First and foremost, always promote the importance of agriculture and the employment opportunities available. Let parents of potential students know that a degree in agriculture is much more than just farming and that earning potential can be competitive with other fields of employment. Take a close look at the College of Agriculture at LSU and what it has to offer (http://www.coa.lsu.edu/). For more information on undergraduate programs in agriculture or to have someone visit with a potential student, contact Mary Claire at the email address provided above. For information on graduate programs go to the College website and click on Departments. I will also be glad to visit with potential students. The future of agriculture is at a crossroads and your help in recruitment efforts is needed and greatly appreciated.

James L. “Jim” Griffin
Lee Mason LSU Alumni Association Professor,
School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences and
Graduate Student Recruiter
225 578-1768 (office)
jgriffin@agcenter.lsu.edu
http://www.coa.lsu.edu/

Reflecting on 2014 LATMC

♦ Long-time LACA Executive Board member and highly revered consultant, Roger Carter, received the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame Award.

♦ LACA awarded the traditional undergraduate scholarship, and two doctoral scholarships to worthy students pursuing life careers in agriculture.

♦ Our program included our first-ever motivational speaker, Bobby Petrocelli, introduced to us by our current president, Randy Richard and his fiancée, Katie Authement.

♦ Our first, very successful silent auction and gun raffle were held to fund the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Row Crop IPM.

♦ In spite of rare snow and icy conditions in Louisiana, we had record attendance!
Worker Protection Standards—Changes Proposed

EPA Pre-Publication Copy: http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/safety/workers/proposed/pre-pub-wps-proposed-rule.pdf

Outline:

• Instructions to Submit Comments: page 2
• General Information, Executive Summary: pages 2-6
• Background: pages 6-27
• Statutory Authority: pages 27-34
• Overview and Sources of Information: pages 34-56

• Overview of Proposed Revisions: pages 56-248
• Implementation, References, Review Requirements: pages 248-281
• Proposed Regulatory Language for 40 CFR Part 170: pages 282-345

EPA Purpose Statement: The EPA proposes to revise the existing Worker Protection Standard (WPS) at 40 CFR part 170 to reduce the incidence of occupational pesticide exposure and related illness among agricultural workers (workers) and pesticide handlers (handlers) covered by the rule. This regulation, in combination with other components of EPA’s pesticide regulatory program, is intended to prevent unreasonable adverse effects of pesticides among pesticide applicators, workers, handlers, the general public, and vulnerable groups, such as minority and low-income populations.

This is the link to make comments on the new WPS recommendations:
http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0184

The comment period has been extended until August 18th.
Congratulations to LACA Voting Member, Ashley Peters on completing the LSU Ag Leadership Program. Shown from left to right are Dr. Phil Elzer, Ashley, and Bobby Soileau.

Former Dean of the College of Agriculture, Kenneth Koonce, Jong Hyun Ham, associate professor in the Dept of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology, recipient of the first Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Louisiana Row Crop IPM, Rebecca Melanson, Mr. Ray Young, Dr. Rogers Leonard, and Dr. Donnie Miller.

Shown at right is Rebecca Melanson with Ms. Dorothy Young at the 2014 Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference where Rebecca gave a presentation on her research and what it meant to be the first recipient of the Young Endowed Assistantship.

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

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