



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

TURNROW TALK

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President's Column

Tim White

Agricultural Management Services, Inc., Jonesville, LA

How fast conditions can change. At the LATMC meeting in February, we had about six inches of snow on the ground and everyone was wondering how we would get all of the ruts filled in that were caused by poor harvest conditions last fall. The dry weather has been a blessing thus far, but we need moisture to get all of the crops planted. Hopefully, we will receive adequate rainfall this weekend to get the majority of the crops planted in a timely manner.

On the political front, the LSU Agcenter is once again facing serious budget issues. Not only are these cuts occurring at the state level, but some parish offices are not being funded by parish police juries and the parish offices are being forced to seek private donations to keep these parish offices open.

On a more positive note, cotton acres are on the rise for the first time in several years. According to Marc Bordelon, there was just a tad over 225,000 acres of cotton planted in the state last year, and the National Cotton Council is projecting about 233,000 acres being planted this year. This increase is a positive sign, but the infrastructure needs more. With cotton prices increasing, maybe 2011 will see more acres coming back to cotton.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Mr. Ray Young. Mr. Ray has promoted consulting and production agriculture at both the state and federal level for many years. He is a true inspiration to all of us "younger" consultants and holds testimony that when something is worth "fighting" for, the scrapes and bruises you might have to endure during the "fight" will eventually disappear and the result will be that you're just the more tough for having gone through the "fight".

I would reiterate what Roger Carter has said many times in his weekly newsletters...call or email your D.C. representatives to let them know how you feel about current situations in agriculture. 2010 will be the year that we'll see producers who experienced disasters in 2008 and/or 2009 either "come out" or "go out". I look forward to serving as your LACA president this year. Best wishes for a productive season!

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Welcome, New Members!!!

Joining LACA in the fall of 2009 and winter/spring of 2010 are the following new members.

Voting: Chris Ward, Ward Crop Consulting, Inc., and Jimmy House, House Agri Service.

Affiliate: David Chaney, Jr., Syngenta Crop Protection, Natalie Hummel, LSU AgCenter, Daniel Stephenson, LSU AgCenter, Josh Zaunbrecher, Syngenta Crop Protection, and John Kruse, LSU AgCenter.

Joining as Sustaining Members were AgriEnergy Resources, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), RiceCo, and SFP.

If you would like to support the LACA by joining the association, please visit our website at www.laagcon.org and apply online. A current voting member must nominate anyone applying for voting, associate, or affiliate membership.

Well the time is finally arriving; I will officially retire July 1st this year. It seems like only a short time ago I returned to Louisiana to take this position. It's been fun, exciting, controversial and a pleasure working with all of you and especially the people of Louisiana. As of now the initial plans include doing things with my wife, visiting my daughter and welcoming my new granddaughter in September and having fun with my son, Shannon, his wife, Christine, and my granddaughter Madison. Later we plan to travel a little and visit several places we'd like to see, and of course do a little more hunting and fishing. I also have a honey-do list that I've already started; well at least I've looked at it! I have not decided any farther than that but there are some possibilities that will be addressed in time.

It has been a pleasure for me to work with many of you individually and all of you through our meetings and programs. We have had many good times together and several occasions when we have agreed to disagree but always for the good of our clients. The disagreements are the things that make us work harder to solve the problems at hand and to strive for better in the future. I think we have done that and our working relationship is proof of that. I would also like to thank the organization for your support of the 4-H program, as it has meant a great deal to the kids who will be the future of agriculture. Remember we can get more done if we work together and I know we have. Thanks for all the support and information we have shared. Hope to continue to see many of you in the future.
Dale

Membership Input is Valuable and Welcomed

The LACA Executive Board, Governmental Affairs, and LATMC Program Planning Committees will again gather with LSU AgCenter and USDA, ARS researchers and specialists, as well as other invited guests to discuss current issues and pertinent topics for our 2011 annual consultants' conference to be held Feb. 9-11, 2011. This "planning" meeting will take place October 14-15, 2010 at Paragon Casino and Resort. Even though you may not currently serve on the Board or one of the aforementioned committees, we would still value your input as to what topics you think are important and also would be interested in speakers you may have in mind. This meeting is YOUR meeting and we want to serve our membership by providing the most informative and up-to-date presentations that we possibly can. Please let us know of any suggestions you may have regarding the annual conference and how we might make it even better for you!

After years of declining sorghum acres and a "technology gap" between sorghum and other crops, the newly established Sorghum Checkoff is a producer-funded organization that plans to energize the sorghum industry by providing new research, market development and promotion opportunities for producers.

The Sorghum Checkoff was established in July of 2008 under the Commodity, Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996. Since then, the checkoff board of directors has worked diligently to create an organization with a single-minded focus on improving the profitability of the sorghum industry through research, promotion and information. The checkoff rate for grain sorghum is 0.6 percent of the net value and is collected at the first point of sale. The checkoff rate for forage sorghum is 0.35 percent of net value.

The program has funded more than \$1.25 million in research projects. Those projects include over-the-top weed and grass control technologies and optimal irrigation strategies, as well as research on sorghum germplasm, drought and cold tolerance traits. At the same time, USCP has also created regional production handbooks for practical, hands-on production advice. This guide includes information regarding hybrid selection, efficient water and nitrogen use, and pest management.

In addition to research projects, the Sorghum Checkoff has also sponsored market development events in its first year of operation. They targeted research on the use of sorghum in ethanol and found that 30 percent of the U.S. sorghum production is used in ethanol. Scientists also studied the best methods to overcome barriers to further use. In conjunction with the U.S. Grains Council, the Sorghum Checkoff has sponsored multiple foreign buyer missions, some of which resulted in the international purchase of thousands of tons of American sorghum.

The Sorghum Checkoff is unified in its mission and will continue to bring new thinking and energy to the industry. Your input about the checkoff is very important. Sorghum Checkoff board members and staff are happy to answer your questions about the program. For more information or to request a copy of a production guide, please visit the Sorghum Checkoff website at www.sorghumcheckoff.com or call the office at 877-643-8727.

A Few iPads Entering Ag Arena. Do You Need One Yet?

Owen Taylor, AgFax Media

During my presentation at this winter's Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference (LATMC), I included the Apple iPad in a group of "new tech" devices that will likely influence how we communicate and process information. The LATMC was held a couple of weeks before Apple made its formal iPad introduction and more than a month before the iPad went on sale, so info was still a bit vague.

Apple, in fact, is still introducing new versions. These first units connect to the internet only through WiFi hot spots - great in town but useless in the countryside. The 3G version, with wireless broadband via AT&T, will hit stores in May.

But a few of the non-3G iPads have at least trickled into the hands of people who work in agriculture, and a faint buzz has turned up on ag forums about how these devices are initially being used in the field.

Not surprisingly, most early iPad adapters are "Mac people," meaning they're among the 3% or so of farmers who own Apple computers. The iPad syncs just fine with Windows. But as with the iPhone and the iPod, the first consumers to embrace new Apple products tend to be its current disciples.

So, how are these people initially using iPads?

First, as portable libraries. Nearly any PDF (Portable Document Format) file can be read and searched on the iPad. One farmer, for example, said that he already had transferred a 250-page technical manual to his iPad. That manual wasn't available in a printed form, only a PDF version on a CD. If he wanted a printed copy, he'd have to print and bind it himself. With the iPad, he simply moved the PDF to the device and carried it to the field. With the electronic version, he also can search words and terms.

All that could be done on a notebook or netbook computer, but a horizontal computer screen doesn't lend itself all that well to documents that start out as printed pieces. You end up scrolling a lot. With an iPad (or an ebook reader that supports PDF) you see a full page, generally large enough to read without magnifying.

Second, running databases. Two farmers were setting up their iPads to carry databases that they already used to track field and equipment records. These were "home brew" databases developed in Filemaker, then synced from the desktop to Bento, Filemaker's portable companion program. (Not familiar with Filemaker? It runs on Apple and Windows

systems and is easier to learn than Access. I speak from experience. All of our own company's databases run in Filemaker's Windows version.)

All that said, the early users point to a few negatives.

The iPad doesn't display Flash video. You can see short videos on YouTube because they're converted to a format the iPad handles via its YouTube application. But if you browse to another site offering regular Flash video, don't expect anything to display. Flash-based cattle auctions and training videos were cited as a couple of things users said they wished they could view on their new iPads.

No GPS, yet. The WiFi-3G models, however, will have that capability, triangulating off satellites, cell towers and known WiFi hot spots.

So, should you buy an iPad yet? I'm inclined to say *wait*. Apple tends to make big improvements in version 2 of its devices, so the next-gen iPad will likely come with more functionality. The application base will expand, too. Also, a similar pad running Google's Android operating system is expected soon. At that point, you'll have a basis for comparison.

A quick tech tip: Having trouble making calls on a 3G phone or experiencing too many dropped calls? Switch to 2G (look in your settings menu for the toggle). This may slow data speed for email or web browsing. But in rural areas, 3G data services may not be too strong, anyway. You can always toggle back to 3G when signals are better. One person who's tried this found that it also extended battery life.

Owen Taylor is editorial director at AgFax Media (<http://agfax.com>) and writes regularly about the ag consulting profession for the Consultant Exchange website (<http://consultantexchange.com>) in The Business of Consulting section.

A New Program to Encourage Our Youth

The latest USDA agricultural census reveals that the average age of agricultural producers in the U.S. is slowly rising and fewer young people are entering the profession.

The LSU AgCenter implemented a new program this year that is instrumental in encouraging our youth to ultimately enter into the area of agricultural production. It is a one-year, intensive classroom/hands-on/mentor-based experience that introduces high school junior and senior students to the options available to them in the areas of food and fiber production and encourages them to enter into this profession. Dr. Paul Coreil reports that 15 qualified

applicants are being considered for the program this year. This is just one more effort by the AgCenter to educate our youth in the field of agriculture. KUDOS!

A Message from the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC)

Dear NAICC State Affiliate Member:

The first quarter of 2010 has been very exciting and *busy* for NAICC! In addition to a great Annual Meeting, we also held the Focus on Precision Conference in Green Bay, WI in early March. Just recently we returned from a week-long stay in Washington, DC for the spring Executive Board meeting, Hill visits with policy-makers and the 13th Annual Crawfish Boil on the Hill.

As you get ready for another growing season, we at NAICC want you to know that we are behind the scenes hard at work for all crop and research consultants. We hope that opportunities will arise for us to work with you throughout the year. Below is a letter from our Education Outreach Chairman Steve Hoffman inviting state associations to partner with us on educational programs.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about the educational opportunities or if you have a project that we can work on together.

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Dear NAICC State Affiliate Members:

The Education Outreach Committee of NAICC is currently looking for an opportunity to partner with an affiliate state organization to co-host an educational conference that would meet the needs of consultants in your region. These conferences have focused on precision ag in the past, but the topics could be anything of interest to your membership. Our recent partners were the Minnesota Independent Crop Consultants Association in February 2009 and the Wisconsin Association of Professional Agricultural Consultants in March 2010.

The purpose of these joint efforts is to bring together "critical mass" so that a high quality program can be offered to our combined membership. The

Education Outreach Committee is experienced in organizing successful regional conferences. Having these conferences co-sponsored by NAICC and a state affiliate will likely draw some attendees from across the country. It also increases the likelihood of securing a nationally recognized speaker. If your organization is interested in exploring this opportunity in 2010 or beyond, please contact NAICC Executive Vice President Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com or by phone (901)-861-0511. She will have the Education Outreach Committee follow up on any questions your organization may have.

Sincerely,
Steve Hoffman, 2010 Chair



The Ag Consultant

They wake up early to meet the sun,
knowing there aren't enough hours
in the day to get the tasks done.

Not only do they have to check some fields,
making recommendations that'll bring
their growers maximum yields,
they also have to practice philosophy,
psychology, and diplomacy skills.

From diagnosing why the stand is skippy to none,
to explaining why it's necessary to save time for fun,
to what's causing the cotton crop to wilt,
to lending a hand on the new shed being built.

The Ag Consultant must be witty and wise,
showing a sense of control, and maybe
even humor when the real urge is to cry.

But, when the long day is over,
reports delivered and tailgate talk done,
the satisfaction and pride of helping
grow America's food is second to none.

2010 Annual Meeting Revisited
Denise Wright, LACA Executive Director

Who would have ever dreamed we would see snow blanket the ground during our annual consultants' meeting this year?!!! But, hey, the SAINTS did win the SuperBowl! For the 3rd and 4th time for some folks, they witnessed the white powdery substance again. For some, the snow hampered the ability to return for recertification on Friday, but for those who did brave the treacherous roads, leaving their families behind, some with no electricity, we want to say how admirable your dedication is! LDAF was very cooperative and announced that those who could not return due to the weather would receive recertification if they had signed in on Wednesday and Thursday. So...thanks to Bobby Simoneaux and Marty Pousson for their understanding and cooperation in making sure our consultants and others remain current in their certifications.

We enjoyed many educational, informational, and entertaining presentations by some excellent speakers. Browse the LACA website (www.laagcon.org) for posting of the 2010 LATMC presentations. You can also find past year's presentations on the website accessible from the homepage under "LATMC Highlights".

We want to again thank those speaker guests coming from a distance out-of-state to help make our conference the success it was. Owen Taylor of AgFax Media (*see Owen's iPad article on page 2*), Dr. Kathy Flanders of Auburn University, Drs. Gus Lorenz and Tom Barber from the University of Arkansas, Jeff Masson of Thompson Coburn, and Stan Winslow, immediate Past-President of NAICC from North Carolina.

To all of our speakers, we say a heartfelt "Thank You". Our AgCenter and USDA ARS researchers and specialists are unprecedented in bringing us the latest research data presented in formats that we are able to take home and apply in our consulting and research professions. We truly do have some of the best here in Louisiana!

Two Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame Awards were presented this year at our annual conference to two very deserving individuals, the late Dr. James Brazzel, and Dr. Ben Legendre. Some of Dr. Brazzel's family traveled all the way from Albuquerque, NM to accept the award on his behalf.

Rearing of insects on artificial diets began in what was then the Department of Entomology and local USDA research facilities at Mississippi State University during the 1960s. Dr. Jim Brazzel, former department head, initiated the first insect rearing laboratory for the Department of Entomology, which

was known as the "Worm Shed". Cotton bollworms and tobacco budworms were the insects of choice. Rearing of the infamous cotton boll weevil on artificial diets was initiated in the early 60s.

Dr. Ben Legendre heads up the Audubon Sugar Institute in St. Gabriel and has 36 years of research and extension experience in the genetic improvement of sugarcane and cane and juice quality with state and federal organizations. He served as research leader for the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service's Sugarcane Research Unit, Southern Regional Research Center in Houma, La., for 11 years prior to joining the LSU AgCenter in 2000 as sugarcane specialist and professor. An international authority on sugarcane breeding and sugarcane quality, Dr. Legendre is recognized for his work on plant growth regulators as chemical ripeners.

Mr. Ray Young was also honored with the first ever LACA Octogenarian Award for his many years of undying loyalty and dedication to the agricultural consulting profession. Mr. Ray was just recently featured in the Market Bulletin published by the Louisiana Dept of Agriculture & Forestry. Our hats off to you, Mr. Ray!

And, I was even honored with gifts from the Executive Board and two of my very good friends from Gowan Company, Keith Majure and Kevin Stewart. Love my cotton jewelry and "Director's" chair! THANKS!!!

I want to take this opportunity to again thank our sustaining members who so generously sponsor our annual conference each year. Their continued support of our consultants' annual conference is one big reason we are able to provide the premium speakers and continuing education required to maintain our certification as independent crop consultants and commercial applicators.

Pictured below are contest winners of this year's LATMC Crop Protection and Production Quiz sponsored by FMC Corporation. Left to right, Fred Collins, Stan Winslow, Harold Lambert, Roger Carter, Andre' Fabacher, and Grady Coburn.





Dr. Ben Legendre accepts the Hall of Fame Award from Dr. Grady Coburn. Congratulations once again, Dr. Legendre!



Dr. James Brazzel's family, (from left) nephews, Rich Barnett and Jerry Brazzel, sister to honoree, Nelda Barnett, and Jerry's wife, Dinah Brazzel. Rich accepted the Hall of Fame Award for his late, great uncle.



LACA voting member and Director on the Executive Board, Justin Turner was the sculptor of this magnificent family of snow people on the hood of his pickup truck.



Scholarship winners, (left to right) Trey Price, Rebecca Melanson, and Matt Bauerle, flanked by our outgoing President, Richard Costello (right) and President-elect, Hank Jones (left). Many thanks to Dow AgroSciences for sponsoring one of the \$2,000 scholarships.



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

Affiliate Member of

