



# Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

## TURNROW TALK

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### President's Column

*by Chad Nelson*

*Professional Farm Services, Crowville, LA*

What a year! As I sit in a deer stand trying to reflect on the past growing season to write this column, the main point that comes to mind is that 2007 has been a year of change.

Last spring we, along with most cotton consultants, were very concerned about the future of our businesses with the upcoming acreage shift from cotton to corn. During the 2007 LATMC I was expressing my concerns to an older and wiser consultant and he told me, "Son, I have been through these types of years before and have made it through them. You keep doing what you know how to do and you will be just fine." After he told me this I thought, he may have made it but I am not sure WE will. Our cotton acres were cut by 65%. Our corn and soybean acres almost doubled. This change still left our consulting income well below where we needed it to be although I must admit that the shorter than normal work weeks and having Thursdays open to play golf was enjoyable. The Lord blessed us with excellent corn crop which allowed our clients to realize some nice profits. We had the best year soil sampling we have ever had, which kept our consulting business in the black. Just as the wise consultant stated last spring, things worked out just fine.

With soybean prices above \$10 per bushel, corn above \$4 and cotton remaining in the sixties the acreage shift to grain may be here to stay for a while. Even with high fertilizer cost, the high grain prices should allow our clients to make profits if they can produce yields. Helping growers make good yields while keeping expenses in check is what makes consultants invaluable. I believe if our clients are making money there are things we can do for them to bring value to their farms as well as our individual businesses.

There are also other things around us that have changed as well. There has been a huge turnover of people in Louisiana politics. We have a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, many new Senators and Representatives, and a new Commissioner of Agriculture just to name a few. We, the LACA executive board, have already begun working to build a relationship with our new commissioner, Dr. Mike Strain and his administration. We are excited that Dr.

Strain has already committed to speak at the 2008 LATMC. We are hopeful we can have the same type of relationship we enjoyed in the past with Commissioner Odom. I am sure all of you LSU football fans can appreciate the comments on change. The entire football season for the Tigers has been a roller coaster of change. The Tigers have been ranked as low as #7 and as high as #1. We thought after the loss to Arkansas our National Championship chances were crushed. On December 1 we woke up that Saturday morning thinking we would lose our head coach and if we could squeeze out a win against Tennessee we could get a Sugar Bowl berth. As of December 2 Coach Miles is here to stay and we are playing for a national title. GEAUX TIGERS!

I would like to thank LACA for allowing me to serve as your President this past year; it has been a great experience for me. Thank you executive board and especially Denise Wright and Roger Carter for all the work you do for this great organization. We had a very good researcher retreat in St. Francisville, a productive meeting with the Ag Center administration in Baton Rouge this year and are looking forward to the best LATMC ever in Alexandria in 2008. Don't forget that we have a change of location in Alexandria this year to the Holiday Inn & Convention Centre. Again thank you for the opportunity to serve you as President. By the way, the day I started putting this letter together in my deer stand I killed a nice buck. That is also a pretty big change for me.

### LACA Works with LDAF to Revise Agricultural Consultant Exams

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since that afternoon of November 9, 2005 when the LACA Exam Review Committee met in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the LA Dept of Ag & Forestry office in Baton Rouge. Meeting with the committee were Bobby Simoneaux, Director of Pesticides and Environmental Programs, Marty Pousson, Program Coordinator of Pesticide Certification, and Dr. Mary Grodner, LSU AgCenter Pesticide Safety Specialist. Discussed were revisions to the agricultural consultant certification examinations. Revision input was received continuously from committee members during late 2005 and early 2006, and then in July, '06, the LDAF completed the revision of three agricultural consultant certification exams. The three revised exams include the Agricultural Entomology, Plant Pathology, and Field Soil Management categories. A fourth examination, Agricultural Weed Control will be revised pending further input by members of the LACA Exam Review Committee.

## LACA Interacts with Other Key Organizations

- ◆ LACA members, **Harold Lambert** and **Blaine Viator** participated in a lineup of speakers at a Wheat Management meeting held October 10, 2007 at the new Dean Lee Livestock Facility. Their presentations were from a consultant's perspective and related to wheat crop rotations following sugarcane and other crops, as well as special issues in managing a wheat crop. Other presentations were given by LSU AgCenter specialists and researchers. This meeting was a cooperative effort between LACA, CCA, and the LSU AgCenter. Presentations can be viewed on the LACA website at [www.laaccon.org](http://www.laaccon.org).
- ◆ Recently, George LaCour, member of the Louisiana Cotton Producers Association's (LCPA) committee on research funding/allocations (for the LSU AgCenter), asked that cotton consultant members of LACA submit areas of research priorities crucial to cotton production in Louisiana. LACA responded with several core issues which our cotton consultants considered to be of extreme importance. Among these were continuing research on control of plant bugs including new chemistry and variety tolerances and cultural practices that may reduce plant bug intensity, and revisiting the growth regulator recommendations to update what was learned in 2007.

### 5th Annual Fall Researchers' Retreat

On September 27-28, 2007, the LACA Executive Board, 2008 LATMC Program Planning Committee, and Governmental Affairs Committee, along with LSU AgCenter, USDA-ARS, and LDAF representatives gathered in St. Francisville, LA for the 5th Annual Fall Researchers' Retreat.

The retreat is intended to bring together key researchers and specialists throughout the state to interact with our independent crop consultants and contract researchers in order to exchange ideas and discuss research needs for the benefit of Louisiana agriculture. This time of networking and information gathering is crucial to bringing topics of interest and benefit to our consultants, producers, and other agricultural professionals at our annual consultants' meeting, the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference. We see almost daily the changes affecting agriculture. Staying informed is our best defense in becoming and/or remaining successful in our agricultural professions. The retreat affords the opportunity for crop consultants and researchers to interact with LSU AgCenter and USDA-ARS researchers and specialists in discussion of important issues affecting Louisiana crop production.

## Cornell University Student Hosted by "One of Ours"

On August 24, 2007, **Roger Carter** took time out of his busy day to entertain and educate a German student attending Cornell University in the Department of Natural Resources. Ms. Stefanie Hufnagl-Eichiner (how did you pronounce that, Roger?) is part of a research team studying farming practices and water quality in the Mississippi Basin. Other members of her team are from Louisiana State University, University of Illinois, Michigan State University, University of New Hampshire, University of California, and the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C.

Stefanie had visited our website and was interested in what LACA was doing to promote nutrient management. Roger educated her to the fact that fertility/precision ag workshops are held to keep our consultants up to date on current technology, we have an advisor on the NRCS advisory committee, we have member consultants that conduct soil testing and analysis, and we have two members working with the LSU Soils Lab in an advisory capacity.

Roger also toured Stefanie around to see different crops and he and his wife, Lise' treated her to lunch in Vidalia. This was probably not on his "list of things to do" that week, but his graciousness and willingness to host this student goes a long way in showing his interest in helping to further the education of the younger generation. It probably didn't hurt that she was real "purty" too! THANKS, Roger!!!

### New IPM Soybean Entomologist on Board at LSU AgCenter by Dr. Gene Reagan

Dr. Jeffery A. Davis began his employment as the new soybean entomologist assistant professor with the LSU Agricultural Center on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. Dr. Davis was selected from a field of 32 applicants, many with outstanding national and international recognitions. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 2006, where he had worked with Dr. David Ragsdale (Dr. L.D. Newsom's last graduate student) and Dr. Ed Radcliff on numerous areas of IPM in potatoes and soybeans. In addition to receiving his M.S. in entomology from the University of Minnesota, his B.S. was in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Davis also served two years with the Peace Corps teaching sustainable agriculture in Senegal, West Africa, and worked in a private laboratory as a plant biotechnology research specialist. He came to LSU with 6 refereed journal publications, and a considerable amount of practical experience, including work with insecticides. The LSU AgCenter is particularly appreciative of the extensive role contributed by members of the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association during the candidate interview process.

## '08 LATMC Highlights

This year the annual meeting of the Louisiana Ag Consultants Association, the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn & Convention Centre in downtown Alexandria on 4th Street. The hotel is adjacent to the Alexandria Riverfront Center. This new venue will offer modern meeting space, as well as lodging. The hotel has recently undergone renovations with improvements made to the ballrooms and lodging rooms. A full service restaurant offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as room service, so for those of you who wish to bring your spouse along this year, they are sure to find the hotel very accommodating to their needs while you are attending educational sessions. As well as the comforts of the hotel, within walking distance are shopping, quaint downtown dining, and sightseeing opportunities. Area attractions include Kent Plantation House, Red River Boat Tours, the River Oaks Art Center, and the Alexandria Museum of Art. Receptions will be held both Wednesday and Thursday evenings as in past years, and for those of you who wish to entertain guests with a night out on the town, there are several fine dining establishments within walking distance or a short ride from the hotel. Easy access from Interstate 49 is another plus to this location. In your preliminary program package, explicit directions from I-49 North and South, Hwy 71/165 North, Hwy 71 South, Hwy 28 West, and Hwy 165 South have been included.

Earlier this year in the spring issue of the newsletter, a poll was taken of possible locations to hold the 2008 LATMC. I had heard from several who suggested we move the meeting to the Baton Rouge or Lafayette area. I received many responses, and the central part of the state, Alexandria, overwhelming took first place. Since our last annual meeting, several possible locations in the Alexandria area have become available. Traffic issues and pricing were the ultimate downfalls of other locations in the state and I think we've made a wise decision in going with Holiday Inn & Convention Centre in Alexandria.

Highlights of our meeting this year will include a scheduled appearance by Commissioner of Agriculture, Dr. Mike Strain addressing our group in the opening general session. Also scheduled during the conference is a farm economics question and answer session led by Louisiana Farm Bureau's David Bollich, a plethora of crop production presentations by LSU AgCenter specialists and researchers, and a encore presentation by Jim Fowler who entertained us a couple years back with his wild hog trapping techniques.

I would like to officially thank our 2008 sponsors for their continued support in making our annual meeting a success! Each year, the enthusiasm and willingness to sponsor events at our annual consultants' meeting is by far the best I've seen in the agricultural meeting circuit. I would also like to extend a special thanks to the LSU AgCenter for supplying audio/visual equipment, as well as a team of professionals to "run the show". Dr. Dale Pollet and his team of A/V experts keep the sessions running ever so smoothly.

You'll want to mark your calendars for February 6-8, 2008 in order to join us at the '08 LATMC. You're sure to come away from the meeting with good sound knowledge to help you in the next growing season and beyond. I'll see you in Alexandria!

### Wheat Disease Management for 2008

*by Dr. Boyd Padgett*

As we near the end of planting our '08 wheat crop in Louisiana our thoughts are turning toward deer stands, duck blinds, and holiday cheer. However, before we tuck our crop in for the winter let's take a quick course in wheat disease management 101. Successful disease management can be divided into several components: 1. disease identification, 2. genetic resistance, 3. cultural practices, and 4. fungicides. The foundation of an effective disease management program is using agronomically-acceptable disease resistant varieties; however, this is not always an option. The increase in wheat acreage has translated into a high demand for seed. Therefore, some varieties planted will be susceptible to leaf rust, stripe rust, septoria/stagonospora, etc. Realize that cultural practices that promote lush growth will tend to extend the leaf wetness periods and increase the potential for disease. To optimize production in these susceptible varieties it will be imperative to monitor for diseases beginning in late winter. In many cases leaf and stripe rust can be found during this period. Leaf rust will usually subside; however, stripe rust can continue to develop. Early-season stripe rust epidemics may warrant an earlier application of a fungicide than leaf rust. Both rusts begin in the lower canopy. Stripe, or yellow rust is characterized as yellow pustules arranged in a linear fashion paralleling the leaf veins. This disease develops best when nighttime temperatures range from 40 to 60°F. There is evidence stripe rust can continue to develop when temperatures exceed 60°F. Pustules of leaf rust are brick or dark red and occur randomly on the leaf. This disease is favored by nighttime temperatures ranging from 60 to 80°F. Similar conditions will favor the development of leaf and glume blotch caused by *Stagonospora* and *Septoria*. Once the disease is identified, fungicides may be needed. Typically, a single application at flag leaf emergence (F8) will be

adequate. Fungicides most effective for stripe rust have been Quilt and Stratego, premixes of propiconazole (Tilt, Propimax) and strobilurins (Quadris, Headline, or Gem). A well-timed application of either propiconazole, a strobilurin (Quadris or Headline), or a premix will be efficacious against leaf rust. Most of the wheat fungicides are somewhat effective against leaf and glume blotch, but this disease is not as much of an issue statewide. Finally, there is preliminary evidence that Charter and Dividend Extreme may provide limited protection from leaf rust, but more research will be needed to confirm this phenomenon.

**NAICC Adds Value to Your Profession**  
by Denise Wright

As Chair of the NAICC Membership Recruitment, Retention, & Rules Committee (MRR&R), I want to personally invite you to attend the '08 annual meeting of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants in Seattle, WA to be held at the Westin Hotel, January 23-26, 2008. If you've never attended one of our conferences, you're missing out on an experience of a lifetime. Two of our presidents have traveled to Louisiana over the past couple years to address you at the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference and have encouraged you to check into the benefits of becoming a member of NAICC. In February, another of our past presidents, Billy McLawhorn will participate in the Cotton Breakout Session on Thursday afternoon. Just like the others, Billy is also passionate about his membership in NAICC. Talk to any of us who are members of NAICC to see how being involved has evolved our professions. The NAICC New Member Campaign sponsored this year by Bayer CropScience will offer 1/2 off the registration fee, as well as comping all convention meals for anyone joining the Alliance prior to the 2008 annual meeting.

**Calendar of Events**

NCC's Beltwide Cotton Conference  
Jan. 8-11, 2008  
Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN

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NAICC Annual Meeting  
Jan. 23-26, 2008  
Westin Hotel  
Seattle, WA

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Southern Weed Science Society Annual Meeting  
Jan. 28-30, 2008  
Marriott Riverwalk, Jacksonville, FL

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Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management  
Conference  
Feb. 6-8, 2008  
Holiday Inn & Convention Centre (Downtown)  
Alexandria, LA

**More LACA New Members in 2007**

Joining LACA as a *Voting Member* was Hank Jones, and joining as *Affiliate Members* were Marc Grabert, Ralph Bagwell, Paul Coreil, Corey Davis, Jerry Jack Ford, Ben Legendre, and Boyd Padgett.

**2007 LACA Executive Board**

Chad Nelson, President  
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Rusty Elston, President-elect  
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Roger Carter, Secretary  
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Fred Collins, Treasurer  
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Bryant Williams, Past President  
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Richard Costello, Director  
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Lance Rodriguez, Director  
225-241-9580 (o/m)

Denise Wright, Executive Director  
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**For information on membership in  
LACA, call Denise Wright at  
337-945-3694 or email  
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**WISHING YOU AND YOURS A  
VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND  
THE BEST FOR 2008**

For information on membership in NAICC  
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