



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

Turn Row Talk

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President's Column
Jay Frantom, Ph.D.
River Road Crop Services

As late as Thanksgiving week, I was still bemoaning the effects of fall rains on our later-picked cotton—regrowth, cotton on the ground, wet modules, delayed module pick-up, rutted fields, and so on. I've seen much worse in my 45 or so years of scouting and consulting, but sometimes I'm in need of a reminder. This time, that reminder came from my good friend, retired consultant **Paul Templet**, of Thibodeaux, La.

With my roots in cotton country, what I know of sugarcane farming mostly comes from my conversations with Paul. He routinely sends me updates from Bayou Lafourche sugarcane country, his latest being photographs and videos of the wet and muddy sugarcane harvest. Viewing those incredible images reminded me that the 2018 cotton crop—at least in my area—is picked and ginned, and the yields, for the most part, are excellent. Even my November-picked cotton yielded surprisingly well. Paul's photos also gave me an appreciation for the level of determination needed to harvest a sugarcane crop under this season's adverse weather conditions. The economic realities of farming can certainly inspire such determination, but, considering the 220-plus year history of sugarcane production in Louisiana, one can hardly dismiss the cultural component. Generation after generation, *it's what they do*—and they do it as well or better than anyone. My hat's off to our intrepid Louisiana sugarcane farmers.

Speaking of farming generations, my family hasn't farmed cotton in nearly a century. My late grandfather, Bob Frantom, in partnership with his brother Dan, farmed his last cotton crop in 1920, the year my father turned six years old. "Uncle Bob", as he was called, was born in 1873, against the backdrop of Federal occupation and Reconstruction in Ouachita Parish, La. The scale of historical events he witnessed during his 99 years is mind-boggling. He shared many of his life stories with me, including those relating to his years behind the plow. Some of my personal favorites were his recollections of the Mexican boll weevil's migration into Louisiana and its devastating effect on yield and farm income. He described in detail the difficulties involved in attempts to control the boll weevil with applications of arsenical dusts. His vivid recollections were never expressed with personal overtones of complaint or hardship; in retrospect, he somewhat reminded me of a history professor delivering a lecture. (I've often wondered if he missed his calling.) After the 1920 cotton crop was picked, the brothers left the share-rented, alluvial river bottom farm and moved the families back to their small subsistence farms in the hills of Ouachita Parish. Henceforth, my grandfather's closest connection to cotton farming was his seasonal job as bookkeeper for a local gin.

My grandfather's life stories were among his greatest gifts to me. From listening to his experiences with boll weevils and other pests and diseases of his era, I came to an early awareness of how a single agricultural pest or disease agent can alter the course of human events—including my own. Not only did my grandfather encourage me to seek higher education, but he also influenced my course of study. As a kid, I may have thought I was asking the old-timer enough questions, but as an adult with an interest in history, I cringe at the number of questions I neglected to ask him. So, for now, I can only hope that my consulting efforts honor his memory.

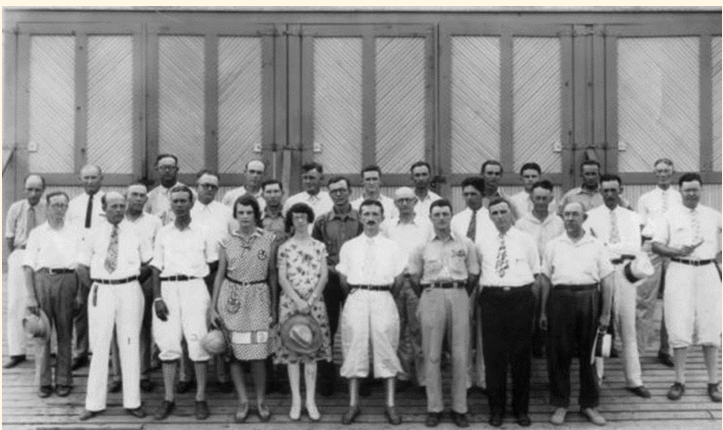
When news spread of two boll weevils trapped late-season near Batesville, Miss., I was reminded of the pest's impact (putting it mildly) on my scouting and consulting efforts in the years prior to eradication. According to experts at MSU, the dissected specimens were identified as males of the Mexican population (slightly different morphology), as compared to the southeastern boll weevil. Subsequent DNA tests confirmed as much. Quite naturally, there were some early assumptions about boll weevils hitching rides with custom pickers traveling from active boll weevil zones in south Texas. Later, I read there was no definitive evidence to support the hitchhiker hypothesis. So, for now, we can only speculate how *los dos amigos*



found their way to Panola County, Miss., or if any fellow travelers will descend upon us in the coming season. That being said, I'm interested in hearing what adjustments, if any, will be made to BWEP monitoring in Louisiana and neighboring states for 2019.

For anyone who might enjoy reading about the early decades of boll weevils in Southern cotton production or aviation history, I recommend a doctoral dissertation: ***Roots: From Crop Duster to Airline; The Origins of Delta Air Lines to World War II***, by James J. Hoogerwerf. Upon his retirement as a pilot for Delta Airlines, the author pursued a Ph.D. in history at Auburn University, his subject being the early history of his former employer. As the author thoroughly establishes, the history of Delta Airlines, the boll weevil, and ag aviation are undeniably intertwined. He begins with the history of the boll weevil invasion of the U.S. and the subsequent establishment in 1909 of USDA-Bureau of Entomology's Delta Laboratory in Tallulah, La. He continues with Dr. Bert Coad's early research at Delta Laboratory with arsenical insecticides and their application by ground and by air. As a professional pilot, Hoogerwerf aptly recounts the re-engineering of Huff Daland's military biplane the 'Petrel', into a mission-dedicated ag plane. He describes the founding of Huff Daland Dusters (a subsidiary of Huff Daland Aircraft Co.), its start-up in Macon, Ga., relocation to Monroe, La., change of ownership to Delta Air Service, and renaming as Delta Airlines. The details of winter season dusting operations on sugarcane and cotton in Peru are especially interesting. Hoogerwerf also gives a thorough biographical treatment of Collett E. Woolman, the LSU county/area agent who was the founding manager/entomologist of Huff Daland Dusters and who later ascended to president and CEO of Delta Airlines. To be expected, the author provides a wealth of literature citations for his meticulously researched piece of history. Hoogerwerf's dissertation can be viewed/downloaded at: <https://etd.auburn.edu/handle/10415/2408>

In closing, I'd like to express my gratitude to the LACA membership for allowing me the privilege to serve as their 2018 president. Serving on the Executive Board has truly been a unique and rewarding professional experience for me, and I have especially enjoyed my interactions with the dedicated board members. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to make new acquaintances with ag-related folks in the public, private, and corporate sectors, some of whom I may not have met otherwise. To our Executive Director, **Denise Wright**, I offer my special thanks for keeping me pointed in the right direction. To all, I wish a healthy, safe, and prosperous 2019.



Staff of USDA Delta Laboratory, Shirley Field, Tallulah, La., circa 1924. Dr. Bert Coad is on the far right. War has been declared on the boll weevil.



Huff Daland "Petrel" near Macon, Ga., in 1925, prior to company relocation to Monroe, La.



Delta Air Service operations at Selman Field, Monroe, La., circa 1930. Airplane shipping containers, seen in this photo, were used for fall shipment to Peru.



Delta Airlines operated its aerial application division as late as 1966, with bases of operation in Monroe, La., Homestead, Fla., Greenwood, Miss, and Bryan, Texas (shown here).



2019 Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference

Denise Wright
LACA Executive Director

The LACA Executive Board along with the 2019 LATMC Program Planning Committee has been working since our fall planning meeting in October, and actually since our 2018 annual meeting to bring you a knowledge-filled and enjoyable meeting where you can network with your peers and take home invaluable information that your business can grow on. The Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, LA will once again be the venue for our annual consultants' conference. This year we are moving to the front end of the week (to avoid Valentine's Day for all you lovers out there), February 11-13 (Monday-Wednesday).

We have changed the format of the program up somewhat from years past. NEW this year, all emerging technology presentations will be spread out amongst and between scheduled conference speakers. The LACA Executive Board and LATMC Program Planning Committee thought this best to give those sustaining members of LACA more exposure. We are very appreciative of our sponsors who are more than generous when it comes to making our meeting the best it can be! Some of our sustaining members are also donating door prizes which will be given out prior to and/or following each program session. This is NEW!!! Tickets will be given to attendees at registration, so hold onto these for your chance to win an exceptional door prize at one or more program sessions! Exciting, right?!!

The pre-conference symposium this year will feature Jay Mahaffey, Bayer Scott Learning Center Manager. A lot of us know Jay, and what a knowledgeable, entertaining speaker he is! Pre-registration is required for this session since seating is limited. Jay will focus on good agronomics and decision making for both grain crops, as well as cotton.

Bobby Skeen, Executive Vice President of the Louisiana Cotton & Grain Association will be with us this to give his insight into the future of grain and cotton production and marketing. Like Jay, Bobby is known for his entertaining attributes. I will venture to say, no one will be sleeping through these sessions!

Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM will address our group in the closing general session this year, as will Dr. Bill Richardson, AgCenter Vice President and Dean of the LSU College of Agriculture. Joel Cape, Ag Attorney with Cape Law Firm PLC in Fayetteville, AR will close our conference with his take on the "Roundup" verdict.

There will be many more speakers/presentations that will be enlightening and help you to make better decisions in the year to come in helping your growers be more profitable and good stewards of the land at the same time.

During our Awards Ceremony on Monday, Feb. 11th, six, yes six scholarships will be given out to very deserving students. A HUGE THANKS to our sponsors for funding these scholarships!!! This is NEW to our conference this year also, since over the past recent years, only 3-4 scholarships were funded. We will have two in each category this year, undergrad, Masters, and Doctoral. And, we could have given more scholarships with the class of applicants we had this year. This tells me we have some great

students out there that will be working to sustain agriculture throughout the years. We will have a silent auction this year to raise money solely for our scholarship fund, and hopefully will make this a standing event. Although we have some very generous sponsors who are currently funding these scholarships, we want to give away more!!! As mentioned earlier, there were too many qualified applicants this year to give all qualifying and deserving a scholarship. In some cases, the winning recipient was only a few points ahead of his/her competitor. The LACA Scholarship Committee doesn't "just give" these scholarships away...they have to be earned, and they are by some of the brightest and the best! The 2019 LACA scholarship recipients will be showcased in the spring issue of the TurnRow Talk newsletter.

Paul Templet, long-time chair of the LACA Scholarship Committee will be stepping down from his chair position this year due to health reasons and just because he's served his time. Paul, we cannot express enough the gratitude we have towards you for genuinely caring about these students enough to beat the bushes for applicants and then stay up burning the midnight oil while pouring over applications, transcripts, and reference letters. You have been the epitome of committee chairs and we will miss your service. Paul has agreed to be just a phone call, text, or email away when needed for his expert advice. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO LACA AND LOUISIANA'S STUDENTS!!!**

Also being honored this year will be another of our LSU Extension County Agents, who goes above and beyond expectations. I'll keep this under wraps for now...you'll have to attend to find out who wins the LACA County Agent of the Year Award...

I hope you'll join us for our meeting in a couple weeks. We are striving to make this "the meeting" in Louisiana that ag professionals want to be at to be in the know. See you soon...

LSU Departmental Funding

Plant Pathology &

Crop Physiology—

"Excellence Fund" No. 100250

SPESS—Fund No. 104089

Entomology—

Fund No. 100162

100162



Commissioner's Message

Each year begins with new hope and promise. As we look back at 2018, it will be remembered by many as a year of unforgiving weather and loss of markets. For soybeans, it was "The Perfect Storm"; a bountiful crop, record acres, continuous rainfall at harvest, and loss of market share due to tariffs and the trade war. Of all of our crops, it seems that soybeans were affected the most, however almost all crops were affected. As I write this article, we still have cotton and sugar cane in the fields, some of which may be harvested and millions of bushels of soybeans either left unharvested or plowed under. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Sonny Perdue and members of our congressional delegation came down and toured the area and met with farmers, mills, and elevators.

We are working collectively to secure additional dollars to help offset the losses of 2018. Additionally, we are working diligently to re-establish trade and open new markets. We have signed a tentative agreement with Mexico and Canada (USMCA) which awaits ratification by Congress. We called a truce and are negotiating with China on the terms of a bilateral trade agreement. China has begun buying soybeans and other products again from the U.S. Further, we are meeting and negotiating with Japan, India, the European Union, and many other countries in order to diversify and grow trade.

Here at home, we are engaged with the federal government and the Corps of Engineers as well the State Department of Transportation and Development and the administration in one of the largest projects in Louisiana history to dredge the Mississippi River from the Head of Passes (mouth) to Baton Rouge to a depth of 50 feet. This will allow ships to load an additional five feet of draft and further allow for larger ships to trade on the river. This is a four-year, quarter-billion dollar state and federal project with a massive economic impact. In year one, the first ten miles will be dredged at Head of Passes which will open up an additional 50 miles of the river for deep draft vessels. In addition, over 1,500 acres of wetlands will be restored using the spoils, saving land and critical habitat. Currently, approximately 60 percent of the grain exported from America comes down the Mississippi river to our elevators to be blended with grain we produce and is exported worldwide. We expect that the cost savings to load bigger ships will extend the boundaries of our reach into the heartland of America by an additional 200 miles each way and result in over 70 percent of the export market share.

Additionally, we are developing new infrastructure at the Ports of New Orleans and Baton Rouge and have plans to dredge and make improvements at our other major ports. This includes railway yards in Baton Rouge and Laccassine, as well as many other projects.

In addition to the growth in science and technology allowing for greater productivity and efficiency, the added tools of market growth, efficient transportation, infrastructure investment, coupled with new opportunities bring great hope and promise for the future. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting where we can discuss these and other issues in greater detail.

Mike Strain, D.V.M.

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry

Louisiana Student Recipient of NAICC's Foundation of Environmental Agricultural Education (FEAE)

Richard L. Jensen Memorial Scholarship

James Noah Harper is the recipient of the Richard L. Jensen Memorial Scholarship sponsored by the FEAE, the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants' Foundation. (And, he is also a recipient of one of the LACA undergrad scholarships being awarded this year at the LACA annual meeting.)



Noah is a sophomore majoring in agronomy/plant and soil systems in the college of Agriculture at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Noah was born and raised in the farming community of Crowville in Franklin parish, rural Northeast Louisiana. His family has roots that run deep in agriculture. Both of his grandfathers and his great uncle farmed row crops at one point in their lives. His dad and uncle both farmed at a previous time in their careers, and his dad was a consultant for many years while farming corn, cotton, and soybeans in Franklin parish. His father currently works for Winfield Solutions as a Master Agronomy Advisor in Louisiana, while his uncle is currently employed by Ouachita Fertilizer Company, supplying and servicing fertilizer needs of growers in the area. Noah has also established his roots in agriculture in Northeast Louisiana. As a young boy, he assisted his dad with day to day duties on the farm. For the past 4 years, Noah has worked during the summers as a field scout for Peters Crop Consulting (LACA voting member, **Ashley Peters**) business. He started during his junior year in high school, and in the summer of 2018, he completed his 4th season. When he started, he did not know about scouting row crops, although, he caught on very quickly. He paid great attention to detail and asked many questions when he was unsure of something. Noah is always willing to come to work early and stay late, as is often required when working as a crop consultant in cotton, corn, soybean, rice, and sweet potato.

Noah is very involved in many activities, besides just working. In high school he was active in many clubs and organizations during his time there. During his summers working for Peters Crop Consulting, he has also participated in multiple mission trips with his church, working in Africa teaching others how to use agriculture to become self-sustaining. Upon entering LSU, he immediately became involved in many aspects of campus life, including Greek life and joining Les Voyageurs. While participating in these various activities, he also holds a part time job on campus with a professor in the department of Agronomy.

Noah is a hardworking, outgoing, intelligent, involved, and driven individual. He is passionate about agriculture in Louisiana, and is a motivated individual that will accomplish great things no matter where his path leads. Congratulations, Noah, on being the winning nominee for this national scholarship.

*Submitted by Ashley Peters
Peters Crop Consulting*

Lagniappe



Last spring, LACA Executive Board member, **Blaine Viator**, and Chad Webre of John Deere, hosted Brazilian student, Stephanie Ramos and LACA Executive Director, **Denise Wright** on a tour of the John Deere manufacturing plant located in Thibodaux, LA.



LACA member, **Harold Lambert** visits with retired MS consultant, Joe Townsend at a Cotton Consultant of the Year event.



Stephanie Ramos and **Denise Wright** livin' it up in NOLA at the Palace Café the night before Stephanie left to go to the Texas High Plains to scout for consultant, James Todd.



Mr. Ray and Ms. Dorothy Young strolling in Savannah just prior to the NAICC annual meeting. Picture stolen from FaceBook.

LACA Southern Hospitality



LACA member **Lance Rodriguez** (right) graciously hosted a special tour of the Alma Sugar Mill, Lakeland, La., for Massachusetts crop consultants Robin Spitko and Glenn Morin (pictured) and fellow LACA member **Harold Lambert** (photographer).

BRAZIL 2018

Denise Wright, LACA Executive Director

According to LACA Executive Board Secretary, **Hank Jones**, this article should have been a live presentation at our annual meeting, but I'm sure I would have put everyone to sleep within the first few minutes...I traveled to Brazil along with Bootheel of Missouri rice consultant and one of my dearest friends, Amy Beth Dowdy around mid-February to visit Brazilian consultant, Fernando "DinDin" Martins of AgroExacto. DinDin had come to Louisiana in the summer of 2015 with several of his growers and a fellow consultant and **Grady Coburn** and I had toured them around, so DinDin wanted to extend his Brazilian hospitality to us. Initially, we were to be accompanied by an entourage of consultants, but as time drew nearer to depart, Amy Beth and I were the only ones left standing, so we embarked on an adventure neither of us will soon forget! It is not an easy or inexpensive task to prepare for a trip to Brazil...you must have a travel Visa, as well as your passport, and many, many, many injections and/or malaria pills, or so we were told...(when we arrived in Brazil, we were told really only one shot, yellow fever, was necessary for the area we visited). Oh well, better safe, than sorry, I guess...right???

Brazilian hospitality is second to none!!! After a 10+ hour flight overnight we arrived in Sao Paulo where DinDin met us. We had a long layover before going on to Campo Grande, but DinDin being the exceptional host he is, brought us to the VIP lounge where we were able to shower, change clothes, and eat and drink our fill. We arrived at DinDin's mother's home in Campo Grande the first evening, and you would have thought she was our Mother! She hugged and kissed us upon arrival and made us feel at home, treating us like royalty. They have "help" in their homes, so we really did feel like we could just relax and enjoy.

The food there is excellent, and we were told if we didn't go back at least three times, the cook and/or host would be offended. Needless to say, it's a good thing we did a lot of walking while there...my favorite was the cheese breads, and little stuffed meat thingies (Coxinha is the Portuguese term for these scrumptious delights). There were also Jabuticaba trees with berries very similar to our muscadines, which grow on the trunk and branches of the tree. Delicious!

We did everything from visiting huge row crop and cattle farms to snorkeling in a crystal-clear river, where I was

told no anaconda or piranha resided, however, later after having swam there, DinDin's mother told me otherwise. I felt a little faint...

We stayed a few days in "beautiful" Bonita, where we visited and played in gorgeous waterfalls. We enjoyed an authentic Brazilian barbeque at one of DinDin's grower's farm in Maracaju, the sausage capital of Brazil, eating the hump of the Maladi (Brahma-like) cattle. A little tough, but very tasty!

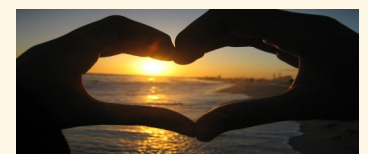


Pictured directly above is Brazil's delicious Caipirinha, made with cachaça, (sugarcane hard liquor), sugar, and lime. At least one a day needed to ward off any parasites!!!

I know it appears that my 10-day trip to Brazil was all play, and no work...mostly true!!! But, I did learn a lot about the agriculture in Mato Grosso do Sul, the major industry there. The wide-open vastness of the landscape amazed me, as did the speed of the drivers. I did think more than once I'd come back in a bodybag!!!

This is just a very brief overview of my adven-

ture...given the chance to return, I would in a heartbeat, if for no other reason than to visit again the most hospitable, warm, welcoming people in the world!!!



LACA Honorary Member, Mr. **Ray Young** is the recipient of the **Vandergriff Pioneer Award**, presented by the Southern Cotton Ginners Association. He and Ms. Dorothy will be the guests of the association at the Mid-south Farm & Gin Show, February 28, March 1 & 2 in Memphis where the award will be presented. The Vandergriff Pioneer Award acknowledges the recipient's life work in cotton.



LACA Honorary Member, Dr. **Grady Coburn**, will receive the **Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction Award** in March when he, along with others are honored at the induction to be held at L'Auberge Hotel in Baton Rouge, LA. A joint effort of the LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Radio Network, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction honors individuals who have made significant contributions to agriculture or agriculture-related industries.



Emily Kraus, the 2018 recipient of the **Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship** and the **LACA Scholarship**, has accepted a post-doctoral research position at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, beginning in January. Her new position involves research on biological control of aquatic weeds. Dr. Kraus recently received her doctoral degree in the LSU Dept. of Entomology under the direction of Dr. Michael Stout. Her dissertation title: "Induced Resistance in Rice, *Oryza Sativa*, to Herbivores in the Southern United States". **LACA** extends congratulations to Dr. Kraus as she embarks on the next leg of her journey as an entomologist. All the best, Dr. Kraus! *(Look for an update on Emily's post-doc research and adventures of living in South Africa in the spring issue of Turn-Row Talk. She has promised one...)*



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