



# Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association Turn Row Talk

**Spring Issue 2021**

**Volume 31**

## A Message from our President-Elect

*Jeremy Babin*

*Calvin Viator, Ph.D. & Associates LLC*

It has been and is an honor and privilege to serve as president-elect for 2020 and 2021 for LACA. I can't thank and appreciate the members, board, president, and executive director enough for everyone's effort in trying to put on our annual Louisiana Agricultural Technology and Management Conference in 2021. Special thanks to the planning committee as we met in fall of 2020 to put together an informative conference only to realize the risk outweighed the reward and had to cancel. Not all was lost though, we were able to take most of those scheduled presentations and create crop specific webinars allowing timely information to be made available to the membership. I look forward to planning our 2022 conference and interacting with our consultants, industry representatives, and researchers at the conference.

Optimism is building as we go into the 2021 crop season. Covid-19 restrictions are being eased as infection cases drop and vaccine percentages are rising. Life as we knew it over a year ago is starting to show itself again. Although 2020 was a tough year personally for everyone, it produced a top three sugarcane crop in the state of Louisiana with several hurricanes thrown in. Weather conditions in spring of 2020 allowed timely field work, herbicide applications, and fertilization to occur on sugarcane that was already advanced from the mild winter. Fast-forward to February 2021 and Louisiana had low temperatures not seen in years to decades all the way down to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Growing a perennial tropical crop like sugar cane all the way into the Bunkie area is no small feat have it not been for varieties bred with better cold tolerance over the years by LSU Ag Center and USDA. Since the freeze in February, it has been a wet and cool spring to say the least. Rain "events" keep seeming to occur with inches coming down at a time, with fronts coming through with cooler than normal temperatures setting back sugarcane emergence. April brought a couple dry spells and some warmer temperatures that allowed fieldwork and fertilization on what I would say again. Some soybeans have been planted in sugarcane fallow land with stands looking good so far, but our time is running short to plant in order to timely harvest them to plant sugarcane.

As most commodity prices continue to rise the outlook for growers to make a profit is looking better. We must remember as consultants that a dollar spent must produce a positive

net return or we might as well put it in a savings account. Some years with commodity prices on the bottom end, tough decisions have to be made as to where to cut expenses, but more importantly is how we manage funds during the high to sustain through the lows. I feel that is what the LACA does for us as consultants through the networking and the annual conference presenters. Information presented at the LATMC is science based through research that gives consultants current options to control pests and field practices that are reliable, efficient, and economical.

I must say I have been blessed to be where I'm at today as a crop consultant. None of this would have happened without someone giving me a chance to prove myself. I met Dr. Calvin Viator while delivering plants to his residence when I was working at a local plant nursery. Dr. Viator hired me in May 2005 and sent me to scout under Mr. Paul Templet. Oh, what fun that was learning from Mr. Paul. Mr. Paul took me under his wing, and taught me everything he knew, plus extra. After a couple weeks I noticed how the growers, and everyone we came in contact with respected and enjoyed being in Mr. Paul's presence, leading me to believe if I could be half as good as Mr. Paul, I could go somewhere in crop consulting. As time passed, he continued to mentor me on what it takes to be a crop consultant, but he didn't realize he was teaching me how to be a good husband, father, and most importantly person. Sixteen years later I'm walking many fields in the same footsteps as Mr. Paul walked for so many years before his retirement. More importantly he also mentored many other crop consultants before me that have gone on successfully in crop consulting or other agricultural related occupations. One of my favorite quotes Mr. Paul says is "you have to find someone that is hungry." I use to think he meant that they needed to make money because they were hungry, but over time I realized it means that they are hungry to learn, work hard, and earn a living. As I end, I'll leave you with these words..."We are only as good as the people we train to carry on our work, so the next time someone needs a chance I would ask you to consider giving them an opportunity to prove themselves."

I wish all of you a safe and productive season.





## **2021 LACA Scholarships**

**Peters Egbedi**

**2021 LACA Scholarship Recipient**

**Funded by Belchim Crop Protection (Dr. Dennis Long)**

I grew up in an agrarian community where peasant farming is predominantly our occupation. Growing up as a child, it was a routine to help my parents in various farm activities. At some point, we had great crop yield losses, which became a puzzle that gave me direction to my career choice in agriculture. I have a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and a master's degree in Environment, Health and Safety from the University of Sunderland, United Kingdom. In my quest to contribute to knowledge and sustainable agricultural development, I am currently pursuing my doctorate in Agronomy with a focus on cover crops and conservation tillage as sustainable crop production practices for improving soil health and crop productivity. Despite the potential of cover crops to improve crop yield without compromising the soil's productive capacity of our future generation, its implementation is still very low particularly in the US. To ensure the global aim of achieving food security in a sustainable manner, we need to further explore this area to bring to limelight its benefits that will lead to a holistic and systematic adoption to help revolutionize crop production. Therefore, the major goal of my research project is to sustainably improve soil health function that will improve soil health and crop productivity without compromising the economic returns to farmers thereby leading to its adoption in Louisiana. Overall, I hypothesize that the adoption of cover crops and other conservation practices will result in a change in crop production practices from the current input maximization to increased yield and profit maximization that will meet the three fundamental indicators (social, economic, and healthy environment) of sustainable agriculture.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the sponsors of this scholarship, and I am greatly honored to be a recipient of the 2021 LACA scholarship award. Thank you.



**Tyler Musgrove**

**2021 LACA Scholarship Recipient**

**Funded by Mr. Ray and Ms. Dorothy Young**



Tyler Musgrove is currently enrolled at Louisiana State University, pursuing a M.S. degree in the department of Entomology, where he currently has a 3.911 GPA in his graduate studies. Tyler earned his BS degree from Louisiana Tech University in AgBusiness with a Minor in Plant Science. For the past five years, he has worked with our own **Rusty Elston** as a field scout in his consulting business, identifying pest problems in soybean, corn, rice, and sorghum. His current research focus is, evaluating the effect of neonicotinoid seed treatments on the early season colonization and establishment of *Spissistilus festinus* (Say), three-cornered alfalfa hopper, in *Glycine max* L., and looking at economic threshold verification of *Spissistilus festinus* (Say) in *Glycine max* L.

*"Currently, there are discrepancies in the literature regarding how economically important this pest truly is. Although annual reports suggest this pest is responsible for millions in economic loss, recent studies suggest that TCAH may not be as impactful as previously thought. If this were true, integrated pest management strategies regarding TCAH may be unnecessary. No previous research has ever evaluated the effects of insecticide seed treatments (ISTs) on the early season colonization and establishment of TCAH in soybean. With the increased usage of ISTs in soybean production, new research must be done to elucidate the effects of ISTs in controlling the TCAH. Therefore, the objective of my research is two-fold: to determine if the current use of ISTs in soybean impact early season colonization, and to determine whether the current state recommended threshold for TCAH needs refinement."*

Tyler's thesis research was in large part his idea after having worked with Mr. Elston. He noted many inconsistencies regarding hopper thresholds and the best control measures for them. His research work will play a key role in evaluating effectiveness of current and future control methods for TCAH in soybean. His work will produce valuable insights that will allow growers and consultants to improve their response to TCAH in their soybean fields. He hopes that his experience conducting research and investigating scientific issues involving Louisiana agriculture will compliment his future goal of becoming an agricultural consultant. Tyler is a hard-working, well rounded, and driven individual who is very deserving of a MS scholarship from the LACA.

## **2021 LACA cholarships**

**Logan Vallee**

**2021 LACA Scholarship Recipient**

**Funded by Dr. & Mrs. Grady Coburn of Pest Management Enterprises**

Logan Vallee is currently a Junior majoring in Ag Business and General Ag at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA. Logan has been involved with his Dad's consulting business for many years, and has served as a crop scout since 2015. In that role, he has been tasked with evaluating crops for different pests and growth stages, as well as pulling soil samples for nutrient analysis. He credits his Dad with instilling in him a love for agriculture and a strong work ethic. During his time at McNeese, Logan has been very involved in the collegiate FFA and many other projects and services with his major professors. Logan comes very highly recommended by his professors and instructors at McNeese, who make note of his desire to learn and advance his knowledge not only in the field with his Dad, but also in the classroom. Upon graduation from McNeese, he plans on pursuing a M.S. in Weed Science at LSU. Logan knows the value of a good education and continuing that education with a post graduate degree, furthering his knowledge in the field. At some point in the near future, he plans on obtaining his consulting license and continuing to work in his Father's business. Logan is a hardworking, well rounded, and driven individual who is very deserving of a BS scholarship from the LACA.



*Logan is the son of our own Travis and Emily Vallee*

**Elijah Ward**

**2021 LACA Scholarship Recipient**

**Funded by Louisiana Land Bank ACA (Stephen Austin, CEO)**

Elijah Ward is currently a Senior majoring in Agribusiness at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. He is from the small, rural town of Crowville, in Northeast Louisiana. Elijah has grown up on and around the farm with his grandfather, father, and uncles. He spent his summers as a teenager working with his family growing cotton, soybeans, corn, and grain sorghum. After graduating from Delhi Charter High School, he enrolled at the University of Louisiana majoring in Agribusiness. He has maintained a 3.3 overall GPA while at ULM, with a 4.0 in his major oriented classes. He received the TOPS scholarship, as well as the ULM Warhawk scholarship, and was invited to join the National Honors Society and is a member of Delta Tau Alpha (the AgBusiness Honors Society). While attending ULM, he has spent the summers working for his Dad's consulting business, Ward Crop Consulting, while also assisting him on his row crop farm. Elijah plays a major role in the day to day operations of both his Dad's businesses, from scouting fields to harvesting crops. On a personal note, during the summer of 2020 when I was short handed in my consulting business, he assisted me for a couple days to help me catch up (Ashley Peters, Chair of the LACA Scholarship Committee). He has been very active in extra-curricular activities while attending ULM. Upon graduation, Elijah plans to obtain his consultants license and continue working with his Dad's consulting and farming operations in Franklin parish. Elijah is a hardworking, well rounded, and driven individual who is very deserving of a BS scholarship from the LACA.



*Elijah is the son of our own Chris and Renee Ward*



**New LSU AgCenter Faculty**  
*Submitted by: Dr. Michael Salassi*



**Dr. Matt Foster** – Assistant Professor / Cotton, Corn & Grain Sorghum Specialist  
Scott Research & Extension Center, Winnsboro, LA  
Started January 2021

Degrees:

B.S. – Plant & Soil Systems (Agricultural Pest Management), L.S.U., 2012

Ph.D. – Agronomy (Weed Science), L.S.U., 2018

AgCenter Appointment: 85% Extension, 15% Research

AgCenter Job Responsibilities:

Statewide extension responsibilities for developing, coordinating and conducting education programs for field corn, cotton, and grain sorghum production based on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Louisiana Agriculture. Responsible for working with other LSU AgCenter faculty/staff to annually update the LSU AgCenter on-farm corn hybrid, cotton, and grain sorghum variety extension publications



**Dr. Tyler Towles** – Assistant Professor – Entomology  
Scott Research & Extension Center, Winnsboro, LA  
Started April 2020

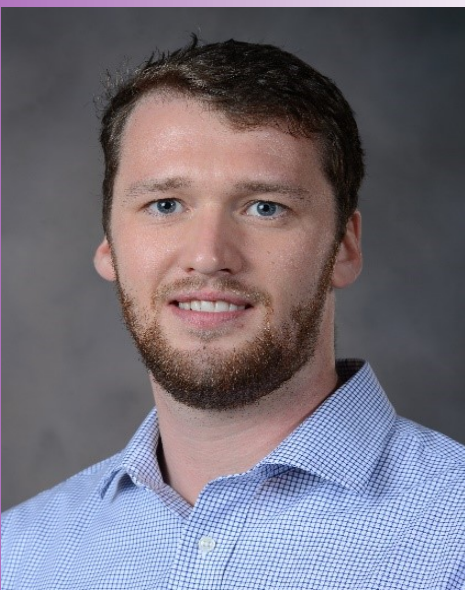
Degrees:

B.S. – Integrated Pest Management, Mississippi State University, 2016

Ph.D. – Entomology, Mississippi State, 2020

AgCenter Appointment: 85% Extension, 15% Research

AgCenter Job Responsibilities: Entomology research on major row crops in Northeast Louisiana



**Dr. Tristan Watson** – Assistant Professor of Nematology  
Dept. of Plant Pathology & Crop Physiology, L.S.U. Campus, Baton Rouge, LA  
Started March 2020

Degrees:

B.S. – Microbiology, University of British Columbia, 2013

Ph.D. – Biology, University of British Columbia, 2018

Post-doctoral fellow – University of Florida Nematology Lab, Gulf Coast Research & Extension Center

AgCenter Appointment: 60% Research, 30% Extension, 10% Teaching

AgCenter Job Responsibilities:

Research in plant nematology, including both basic and applied components to address nematode diseases of crops important to Louisiana agriculture  
Supervise the Nematode Advisory Service Laboratory  
Entomology research on major row crops in Northeast Louisiana



## 2021 Ray and Dorothy Young Graduate Student Award Winners

For 2021, two outstanding LSU graduate students were awarded the Ray and Dorothy Young Graduate Student Award in Integrated Pest Management. The winners, **Maria de Novaes** and **Waana Kaluwasha**, are both Ph.D. students in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology at LSU.

**Maria de Novaes** started her Ph.D. program in plant pathology in 2018 at LSU under the direction of her major professor, Dr. Sara Thomas-Sharma. She has an M.S. degree in Plant Pathology from Vicosa Federal University in Brazil and a B.S. degree in Agronomy from Montes Claros State University in Brazil.



*"I was introduced to plant pathology research during my undergraduate studies with a project evaluating fungicides to manage anthracnose in banana. This research experience motivated me to apply and receive a competitive scholarship for a student-exchange program at the University of Florida (UF), Department of Plant Pathology, which in turn led to many opportunities. At UF, I worked with diseases of vegetables, focusing on evaluating new fungicides for the control of downy mildew on basil under greenhouse and field conditions. The latter led to a major milestone as a young researcher, my first peer-reviewed paper, with me as the lead-author. The thrill of scientific inquiry into plant diseases had now captivated me, and I decided that plant pathology would be my specialization."*

*"I started my graduate education at Vicosa Federal University, Brazil, a prestigious university for plant pathology research in Latin America. As a M.S. student, I evaluated the physiological and biochemical effects of manganese phosphite for the control of white mold, the most important disease of irrigated-soybean. These research experiences taught me that I enjoyed projects that combined fundamental research with the short-term impact of applied research. Currently, as a PhD student advised by Dr. Sara Thomas-Sharma, my research aims to develop new/improved tools to manage Cercospora Leaf Blight (CLB) on soybean caused by three Cercospora species. CLB is the primary foliar production constraint of soybean farmers in Louisiana and my project addresses the two challenges of managing CLB i.e., limited fungicide chemistries effective against the pathogen and few soybean varieties resistant to CLB."*

**Waana Kaluwasha** started her Ph.D. program in plant pathology in 2019 at LSU under the direction of her major professor, Dr. Christopher Clark. She has an M.S. degree in Plant, Insect & Microbial Sciences from the University of Missouri and a B.S. degree in Crop Science from the University of Zambia.

*"I have just begun my third year of full time Ph.D. study in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology. The goal of my dissertation research is to find alternative ways to manage Rhizopus Soft Rot of sweetpotato, in order to reduce the reliance on fungicides. This involves research in and outside of the lab, collaboration with other labs and teamwork with students and/or research associates within the lab. My Master's research focused on comparing sweetpotato cultivar response to Fusarium root rot, as well as evaluating the potential use of cover crops and/or green manure in organic sweetpotato production systems. During both my MS and Ph.D., the goal is/was to find safer and more sustainable ways to manage these important sweetpotato storage rots. As a result, part of my research during both MS and Ph.D. was funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). While the Ph.D. project is on-going, the MS project involved very close collaboration with organic sweetpotato growers who benefited greatly."*



**Awesome Advocates for Agriculture,  
Ray and Dorothy Young**





## **Humankind**

*by Natalie Hummel, Ph.D.*

About a week ago, I opened my email and was delighted to find an invitation from our very own Denise Wright. She kindly invited me to write an article for the LACA newsletter. I enjoy writing as many of you might recall my rice insects blog. I hung up my rice boots upon leaving LSU to move to NC for a job with a Bayer up the road from family. I missed writing. A few years later, I published a Wordpress blog series to chronicle my travels through Europe while on an expat assignment for Bayer. In the 3 years since I've returned to NC my writing has been more spotty and a mix of travelogues and poetry or essays inspired by nature.

Upon the invitation from Denise, I began to ponder topics:

1. The COVID Coop - the zany tale of how we bought a sawmill and milled some of our NC pines into lumber and build a chicken coop. Note we did this in the heat of July - talk about a weight loss plan!
2. Perhaps a story of my garden adventures with the ever-moving footprint until it landed in a permanent home this year.
3. Or maybe something about our classic car hobby and the hilarious way I became the secretary of the car club...

As I thought of these topics, a bigger theme entered my mind: people. As we come out of the COVID19 shutdown I find myself more grateful than ever for the beauty of human connection and the web of people who make our lives joyful and functional. I found this a fine time to think of all those individuals who help, guide and entertain me as I move through life.

My husband. My parents, aunts and uncles. My in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins. My circle of girl-friends who remain connected via a thing we call "book club". My wonderful neighbors. Treasured friends from the many places we have lived across the US and overseas. My doctor. My coach and partner in England. Many, many people I gratefully call upon for all sorts of life advice - career moves, personal decisions, how to make bread, knit, sew or tend to plants. My life is filled with teachers dotted around the globe.

More indirectly, but still extremely important for my daily life, are the grocery clerks and stockers, people who clean public spaces, utility workers, the librarian, shopkeepers, package delivery people, postal service employees, massage therapist, gym workers, bakers and chefs in restaurants, beer brewers and viticulturists. All of these people bring essentials and the luxuries of life into existence by applying their dedication and skill.

As a professional in ag I am deeply grateful for the many people who make our industry an ecosystem of human kindness. The farmer we all work to enable to grow nutritious food as safely and profitably as possible. The retailer who sells him products. The scientists who discover new solutions and the development reps who tests them in the field. The university professors and county agents who valid the trial results are sound and weave it into a program. The sales reps who calls on farm offices or meets the customer at the turn-row to understand their needs. The tractor operators and ag pilots who apply the products that protect the crop and make it strong. The mechanics who keep all the equipment operating. The mill that receives the grain and transforms it

into a marketable product. The buyers who purchase the product and ship it around the world. Where it finally lands in the kitchen of a restaurateur or home chef. Raw materials in which to imbue love and provide nutrition for ourselves and those we love.

Central to making all of this a reality is the Ag Consultant. The person who walks the fields, studies the problems as they arise and is the master of solving the puzzle of growing a crop. A consummate learner and teacher. Marked by humility, grit and a work-ethic truly second to none. People who love the land and the comfort that comes from seasonal cycles. One of the keystones of humanity, ensuring our food supply which is essential for life. Without calories, we are nothing but skin and bone with no fuel to move, think and create.

It's odd it took a global crisis for me to slow down enough to see these connections. The normal hustle and bustle of life in ag can get us so wrapped up in the day to day routines it is easy to miss the bigger picture. I am grateful to receive the lesson from the COVID year: a newfound appreciation of humanity and the power of human connection. To see again the beauty of humankind.



**Natalie Hummel, Ph.D.**  
**Director of University Field Labs**  
**and NC State Research Stations**  
**[hummelcycle@gmail.com](mailto:hummelcycle@gmail.com)**



## Commissioner's Message

As a result of the 2020 global pandemic, the overall U.S. economy regressed more than 2.3% while gross receipts for agriculture and forestry grew 4.6%. According to the March 2021 Wells Fargo Food and Agribusiness Industry Update, economists estimate 6.4% growth in the U.S. for gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021. The report cited the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 in addition to declining Covid-19 cases and increasing vaccinations as key contributors to growth. If realized, this would be the fastest growth on record in 30 years. Also according to Wells Fargo, we can expect the turning point around mid-year. Quarterly forecasts are now estimated at 9.0% (Q2), 9.2% (Q3), and 7.8% (Q4). The GDP growth in China (9.7%) and India (11.5%) will still outpace that of the U.S. Today, immediate value of food and fiber are once again top of mind for every American.

On a global basis, there is a progressive tightening in the marketplace with the decline and narrowing of stocks in most major commodities. According to the latest United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization World Food Supply Report, the production for most major commodities either closely meet or fail to meet consumption in 2020 which as it appears will be similar or greater in 2021. The following are 2020 statistics:

Wheat: production 762.7 Million Metric Tons (MMT)/consumption 758 MMT

Coarse grains: production 1478.3 MMT/consumption 1476.7 MMT

Rice: production 508.7 MMT/ consumption 510.3 MMT

Oil seeds: production 613.3 MMT/consumption 645.4 MMT

Sugar: production 174.4 MMT/ consumption 173.6 MMT

Meats: production 337,345 Thousand Metric Tons (KMT)/consumption 335,471 KMT

Poultry: production 137,118 KMT/consumption 135,779 KMT

With a progressively weakening U.S. dollar as measured against 16 standard currencies by the Wall Street Journal dollar index, losing 5% in 2020 and down by more than 12% from its March peak, coupled with a rising Euro (1.21) will assure a greater volume of exports with a higher dollar value in the near term. This, coupled with worldwide economic growth estimated at an average of 4.3 to 4.5% in developing nations and up to 9.7% in China, there will be a steep competition for commodities and consumables.

The growing effects of climate change resulting in adverse growing conditions and diseases in some areas of the

United States, Brazil, Europe, Africa, and many of the other bread baskets will result in competitive rationing of major grain contracts as reported by Agri-Pulse in an interview with Joe Stone, Cargill's head of corporate trading and executive vice-president for the agricultural supply chain. This is currently evident by the rising futures contracts on many of our commodities.

As climate change continues to be at the forefront of the national agenda, private land conservation initiatives are increasingly recognized for their value in greenhouse gas (GHG) sequestration. Farm Bill conservation programs must continue to provide incentives which help farmers implement conservation practices to prevent erosion and increase soil organic matter such as by no-till drilling, laser leveling, utilizing crop residues and planting cover crops as well as taking full advantage of agricultural conservation easement programs like the conservation reserve program and the wetland reserve programs. Simply put, this means less plowing of the land and reducing disturbance and exposure of the soil organic carbon to the atmosphere.

S. 3894 - Growing Climate Solutions Act of 2020 is now being heard in the U.S. Senate. This landmark legislation amends the Farm Bill and authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program to reduce barriers to entry for farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners in certain private markets and for other purposes. More specifically it is designed to:

- encourage sustainable, climate-friendly farming and forestry practices by providing to farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners access
- to private-sector capital
- facilitate the participation of farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in greenhouse gas credit markets, including through the Program
- provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in overcoming barriers to entry into greenhouse gas credit markets
- assist covered entities in registering under the Program
- establish the Advisory Council to advise the Secretary regarding the Program and other related matters.

This will be carried out through persons or states that will provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, or private forest land-owners in carrying out sustainable land use management practices that, as compared to traditional practices will prevent or mitigate GHG emissions or sequester carbon and support third-party entities that conduct the verification of the processes described in protocols for GHG credit markets.

Further, the term greenhouse gas includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and any other gas that the Secretary, in consultation with the Advisory Council, determines has been identified to have heat trapping qualities.

Reduction activities include:

- land or soil carbon sequestration
- emissions reductions derived from fuel choice or reduced fuel use
- livestock emissions reductions, including emissions reductions achieved through feeds and feed additives

*Con't on page 8...*

- on-farm energy generation, including fuel switching
- energy feedstock production
- fertilizer use emissions reductions
- reforestation
- forest management, including improving harvesting practices and thinning diseased trees
- avoidance of the conversion of forests
- grassland management, including prescribed grazing
- other activities, or combinations of activities, that the Secretary, in consultation with the Advisory Council, determine to be appropriate

Once enacted, this legislation will provide substantial cash incentives to agriculture and forestry which are currently the largest natural bases for sequestration and decreased emissions, to make greater strides which will also positively affect overall net profitability and sustainability.

In addition to weather and other market forces, the issues above are working together to help raise commodity prices which are in some cases more than 60% ahead of last year. I truly expect this year to be an exceptional year for agriculture.

**Mike Strain, DVM**  
**Commissioner**  
**Louisiana Department of**  
**Agriculture and Forestry**  
**(225) 922-1233**



### **Utilizing Scouts in My Crop Consulting**

**Rusty Elston**  
**Elston Crop Management**

My crop consulting career began in 1974 in Bossier Parish. At that time the state had a cotton scouting program, which I believe was led by Grady Coburn. Even now I can remember his enthusiasm to train and educate young people on how to scout cotton. That summer I checked 1000 acres of cotton. My pay was \$1.25 per acre. For a 16 year old I was making "good" money. After that summer I swore I'd never do that again. Fast forward to 2021 and I've worked in consulting every year except one since 1974. I'm thankful for those who spent time with me teaching me all they could about agriculture and crop consulting.

This year is my 19<sup>th</sup> year in business for myself. What a journey it has been! I have hired four scouts of these years. My


son, Daniel, for 4 years, my daughter, Laura, for 5 years, Tyler Musgrove for 5 years and Nathaniel Musgrove for 4 years. I am greatly indebted to these scouts and could not have done the job I've done without them. They each learned to apply themselves even when it was tough and every consultant knows what that means.

Scouts have enabled me to cover more acres per day. I was able to walk entire fields rather than making spot checks or loops. I really enjoyed getting to know the scouts. Even with my own son and daughter we got to know each other better. I enjoyed teaching the scouting skills. Every scout seemed to excel in certain areas, whether it was insect identification, weed identification or disease scouting. The scouts learned about agriculture and about what great people farmers are.

One of my scouts realized that a career in agriculture, possibly crop consulting, was what he really wanted to do. He will graduate from LSU with his Masters in Entomology this year. I believe he is going to pursue his PhD as well.

There are a lot of great memories. This year I'm starting the process again with a high school graduate from Morrow, LA. I'm hoping that he will enjoy crop consulting and want to become a student of agriculture. We certainly need more young men and women to fulfill the agriculture demands in the future.

### **Agriculturists Are Always Essential: Not Just During a Pandemic**

Those of us who work in the ag industry, whether as a crop consultant, research consultant, agchem/seed/fertilizer representative, extension specialist, county agent, producer, or other have been labeled as "essential" during this past year as the corona virus pandemic shut others down completely. Although we have felt the effects of the pandemic, our livelihoods continue day in and day out. We have felt the pain of losing some of our own to this horrific virus, but we stay the course. The Ag community is not only essential now and at all other times, it is resilient, and strong knowing that our ultimate goal is to feed and clothe the world no matter what roadblocks we encounter along the way. Let's continue to pray for God's blessings and protection for this great country that was founded on religious beliefs even when it seems there are those in leadership roles who would like to tear those values down. We can be essential in more than our careers...Let's be essential in standing up for our freedoms!!! 

**For information on membership in NAICC**  
**go to [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org) or**  
**contact Allison Jones at [JonesNAICC@aol.com](mailto:JonesNAICC@aol.com) or**  
**Denise Wright at [wrightpme@aol.com](mailto:wrightpme@aol.com) or**  
**[denise@laca1.org](mailto:denise@laca1.org)**

