



# Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

## Turn Row Talk

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### **President's Column**

*Ashley Peters*

*Peters Crop Consulting*

It's always good to start the new year with a look to the previous one. 2016 was a challenge for most everyone involved in production agriculture. In March of 2016, many areas of Louisiana experienced historic rainfall and the associated flooding and backwater issues. No one was immune to it, whether a cattle producer or cotton farmer, and many producers had to wait a week or more for flood waters to recede to see what was left of their fields and equipment. Some even lost their homes to the devastating waters. Many growers had a stand of corn and had already applied most of their season need of Nitrogen fertilizer, only to have to replant (sometimes twice) and reapply N, P, and K fertilizer. Growers that hadn't planted their rice, beans or cotton yet, were all delayed weeks on getting some of those crops in the ground. Fast forward to April 2017, and we find ourselves in a similar position. I was thinking last week about topics to write about and was going to say at least we are off to a better start than 2016. With my wife, two boys, and I huddled in our interior bathroom last night (4/2/17) amidst 5 simultaneous tornado warnings and multiple flash flood warnings immediately after that, I had to reevaluate. Driving around today, I see a flashback of this time last year. Newly emerged corn fields are under water and cotton, soybean, and rice planting will be delayed to some extent. Checking the southern farming group on Facebook, I see one friend in the Red River valley with a 100 acre+ corn field under 10-12 inches of water. The bright spot, however, we didn't get as much rainfall and backwater is receding fairly quickly. In addition to that, we have a favorable forecast for the coming weeks.

Planting is in full swing now (4/20/17). One grower commented yesterday that he currently has a stand of rice, cotton and soybeans on fields that were still under water this time in 2016. In fact, by the weeks end, most growers in my area will welcome a rain on newly planted, fertilized, and sprayed fields.

Commodity prices are still not great with beans hovering around \$9.45 corn at \$3.88 and rice at \$4.56 per bushel. Cotton is the bright spot in Northeast Louisiana with prices staying around \$0.75 per lb and acreage set to increase 25-50% in some areas., and a couple of my clients tripling there acres from last year. It will be a challenging year with cotton

acres increasing. Many growers are getting into it for the first time or the first time in a long time. Varieties and technologies have changed multiple times since many producers have put cotton seed in the ground. With the tough financial year many of my clients had last year and the potential for new cotton growers in my area, a consultant will now more than ever earn his keep helping with production decisions for his growers. This year will have its own unique challenges I'm sure. Whether its inclement weather or unfavorable commodity prices, we can be sure that our knowledge and determination will be tested in some way. Here's hoping everyone has an uneventful planting season and get all crops off to a good start.

### **THANKS from Mr. Ray and Ms. Dorothy**

The LSU College of Ag Awards Reception (*Awards and Appetizers*) was held March 30th at The Club at Union Square on the LSU Campus.

Representing LACA at the event were Harold and Paula Lambert, and of course Mr. Ray and Ms. Dorothy Young, who were among the honored guests...to quote Ms. Dorothy, "Ray and I had the wonderful blessing of presenting two outstanding students the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowment Award, formerly referred to as the RDY Endowed Assistantship in Louisiana Row Crop IPM. Each student received \$10,000. That is almost unbelievable! The students were chosen by faculty and both were from Louisiana. Matt Foster in Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences, and Jancee Rice, Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology. Both had outstanding resumes."

"Ray addressed the audience and told how the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association (LACA) had initiated this endowment and how thankful we were for these men and women in LACA who had the vision of helping sustain agriculture, and how LACA had successfully raised the money to support this endowment. We want to thank all persons who had a part in making this possible. This investment will pay off in research that will benefit all of us, farmers and consultants alike. We are very thankful that we have been allowed to be a part of this outstanding investment in the future of agriculture in Louisiana. Thanks, Denise for your leadership and again, thanks to all the persons who donated to this endowment. We are humbled and grateful to have our names associated with this great group of people, the membership of LACA."



## Commissioner's Message

As current president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), it is an honor to represent Louisiana and the nation's agriculture leaders at the federal level. In recent weeks, I have made several trips to Washington D.C. where I met with top agricultural advisers. Now that Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue is confirmed, I will be meeting with him in the very near future.

Secretary Perdue takes over during a challenging time, but there is much opportunity for advancement. The next Farm Bill, expanding export opportunities for U.S. producers, and fostering a regulatory environment that allows agriculture to thrive are key priorities for NASDA in which we look forward to partnering with Secretary Perdue. State and federal partners will work cooperatively to advance the success of farmers and ranchers who feed families across the world. The importance of international trade agreements for agriculture, proper implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), and the need for a framework which provides farmers and ranchers a legal, reliable workforce are also issues of great importance. I am pleased to have a voice at the federal level and an honor to represent our Louisiana agriculture, forestry and aquaculture producers.

At the state level, we are busy watching several bills work their way through the legislature and their impacts on our agricultural and forestry industries.

Here is a list of some of the bills we are watching:

**HB 298:** Currently, the law requires new applicants to have earned at least four hours of college credit in each discipline area (entomology, plant pathology, weed science, and soil science) for which certification is sought. Universities no longer offer four hour classes in the ag disciplines. They now offer three hour classes. This bill changes the requirement from four to three hours.

**HB 47 and HB 92:** Adds polyroll tubing to the definition of farm equipment for state sales and use tax exemptions for certain farm equipment. Polyroll tubing was inadvertently subject to tax during the 2016 Second Extraordinary Session.

**SB 126:** This bill designates the Department of Agriculture and Forestry as the state agency responsible for cooperating with the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regarding provisions of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act.

As this is a fiscal session, there are many other tax and funding bills being discussed and we are following them closely to ensure that the agriculture and forestry industries are protected.

Mike Strain, DVM  
Commissioner  
Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry

## Introducing GAIAC

Ian MacLeod, GAIAC Chairman  
Managing Director, Peracto Pty Ltd

The Global Alliance of Independent Agricultural Consultants (GAIAC) is an organization aimed at connecting consultants around the world. While full members of GAIAC need to demonstrate that they fulfil the requirements of an independent consultant, we also welcome others with membership classes to suit all agricultural professionals.

Currently membership is dominated by crop consultants and contract researchers. We expect more diversity in our membership to quickly develop. Our members represent a range of countries including the US, Canada, UK, France, New Zealand, Australia and Brazil.

Some of the benefits GAIAC offers to its members include –

- Encourage and promote the profession and role of independent agricultural consulting and research.
- Support agricultural career development and promote our industry as a career of choice to the next generation of professionals.
- Provide a catalyst for global professional information exchange and professional networking while helping to facilitate knowledge transfer between agricultural practitioners.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of global crop and weather conditions.
- Create opportunities for making international contacts and international contracts for services.
- Enable members to liaise with experts on agronomic issues in other parts of the world.
- Increase member knowledge of pest resistance internationally as they develop.
- Promote member engagement to national and international agricultural sectors.
- Promote sustainable agricultural systems throughout the world.
- Promote the highest standards of ethical conduct in the industry.

Currently our board meets monthly using Skype and we get together for an annual meeting in conjunction with the NAICC annual meeting each January. Next year this conference will be held in Tucson, AZ. For more information, visit [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org) and click on *Annual Meetings, Future Annual Meetings*.

More information on GAIAC and our membership categories can be found on our website [www.gaiac.org](http://www.gaiac.org).

On the following page is a photo of our Board of Directors taken at the recent meeting held in St Louis, MO.



*GAIAC Board of Directors...pictured from left is Brent Wright of Canada, Al Averitt of North Carolina, Patrick Stephenson of England, Yves Coconnier of Southern France, Ian Macleod of Australia, Grady Coburn of Louisiana, Jim Steffel of Pennsylvania, Rick Kesler of Missouri, and Dennis Hattermann of Georgia.*

*These gentlemen **WELCOME YOU** to become a part of the Global Alliance of Independent Consultants!!!*

### **LACA Scholarship Sponsors**

On behalf of the LACA Executive Board and Membership, I would like to thank our very generous sponsors for funding four \$2,000 scholarships this year. Two Doctoral and two Masters scholarships were presented to very worthy students.

AgBiTech, a brand new sustaining member of LACA for 2017, sponsored a doctoral scholarship. Dennis Long, our contact for AgBiTech, was once a recipient of a LACA scholarship and wanted to give back, as he put it. MANY THANKS, Dennis!

Louisiana Land Bank, ACA for the fourth year in a row sponsored a second doctoral scholarship. Our very special thanks goes to Stephen Austin, CEO!

Grady and Barbara Coburn, and their company, Pest Management Enterprises sponsored a masters scholarship for the 2nd year. Thanks to them for their generosity!

And last, but certainly not least, a second masters scholarship was awarded by Ray and Dorothy Young, Crop Production Services (CPS), and RiceTec (Cullen Minter). This group has shared in sponsoring a scholarship for undergraduates for about seven years now, however, we received no applications for undergrad students this year, so they sponsored a second masters scholarship. THANKS to all of you for

your continued support!

We would also like to thank Paul Templet and his longstanding committee who worked tirelessly for hours and days sifting through very qualified students' transcripts, resumes, and letters of reference to get down to the final four! I think he and his committee would agree that usually all the students who make the effort of applying for these scholarships are highly qualified and worthy to receive them. However, there can only be one winner per scholarship, and the best young men or young women win! This is a huge task to undertake and they never have very long to review and make decisions prior to our annual meeting since the deadline has long been January 10th. At our spring board meeting in Baton Rouge, it was decided that the deadline would change to October 1st.

In 2018, we hope to be able to present four more scholarships to deserving students. If you know of students, undergraduate or graduate who would qualify to apply for one of these scholarships, please direct them to the LACA website **[www.laca1.org](http://www.laca1.org)**, **Applications, College Scholarship**. They will be directed to the qualifications and application. Undergraduate students can also apply here for the Jensen Memorial Scholarship which is sponsored by the Foundation for Environmental Agricultural Education, NAICC's foundation.

If assistance is needed, please contact Paul Templet, LACA Scholarship Committee Chairman at [tom-play43@gmail.com](mailto:tom-play43@gmail.com) (985-637-3343) or Denise Wright, LACA Executive Director at [denise@laca1.org](mailto:denise@laca1.org) (337-945-3694).



## Exploring alternative giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta* D.S. Mitchell) management strategies

Bradley T. Sartain  
Christopher R. Mudge

First off, I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Young and the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association for providing me with this great assistantship. Receiving the Young Endowed Assistantship has been an honor and has been a huge help as I pursue my PhD. The main objective of my dissertation research is investigating alternative management strategies for the invasive floating fern giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta* Mitchell). My first year of giant salvinia research has provided valuable data regarding the effectiveness of winter herbicide applications, the impact(s) of aquatic herbicides on defoliated bald cypress trees, and the efficiency of remote sensing technology for mapping herbicide injury. Although I have not analyzed all the data for these projects, I will provide some details of what I have seen thus far.



Figure 1: giant salvinia plants frozen during January 2017

-Severe cold periods after herbicide application may improve giant salvinia control; however, this is highly dependent on the status of the plant, herbicide being used, and the severity of winter.

-Some aquatic herbicides applied to defoliated bald cypress will and will not negatively affect tree healthy and refoliation in the spring.

-Remote sensing is a powerful tool and I predict it will be used more frequently in aquatic plant management. I am hopeful that the information gathered from this research will enable managers to monitor herbicide efficacy in large scale treatments without leaving the office.

Figure 2: Near-infrared reflectance of chemical treated giant salvinia (red=healthy plants, blue=water)

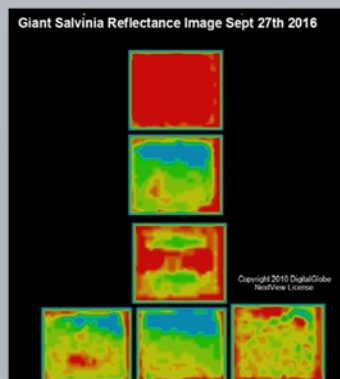


Figure 3: Bald cypress exposed to a winter herbicide application



In addition to the aforementioned projects, I plan to investigate herbicide tolerance of giant salvinia from different areas of Louisiana to determine if populations that have been managed for a longer period of time are more or less tolerant to herbicide applications. It is definitely going to be a busy summer, but I am looking forward to continuing my dissertation research.



**Dr. Jim Griffin, retired weed scientist and LSU College of Ag professor, was a recipient of the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame Award. Shown with Dr. Griffin is 2016 LACA President, Mark Smith at the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference.**



**LACA Scholarship Committee Chair, Paul Templet, Dr. Dwayne Coulon, and Dr. Jim Griffin network at the LATMC.**



**Dr. Johnny Saichuk, retired LSU AgCenter rice specialist, was also honored with induction into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame at our annual consultants' meeting in February. 2016 LACA President, Mark Smith shown here with Dr. Saichuk.**



**Brad Sartain, recipient of the Ray & Dorothy Young Endowment Award in Louisiana Row Crop IPM is shown here with Mr. Ray and Ms. Dorothy during a break at the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference.**

### **Growing Future Talent with Internships**

**Maurine G. "Gigi" Gauthier  
Director of Internships  
LSU College of Agriculture**

The LSU College of Agriculture is proud to work with LACA members in shaping the future of agriculture. Whether you refer prospective students to the college, attend our Agriculture Career Fair and alumni and friends events or provide financial assistance for scholarships and other initiatives, we appreciate all LACA support.

Whatever your role may be – a consultant, research scientist, professor, or industry leader - have you considered who will follow in your footsteps? Do you remember the first job you had that sparked interest in your field or the mentor who played a pivotal role in your personal and professional development? Do you have hiring needs? Have you considered offering an internship to train the next generation of leaders in your profession? The LSU College of Agriculture is seeking partners to do just that.

*Cont'd on page 6 ...*



Internships can be life-changing. They enable students to step outside their comfort zone and apply what they learn through their classes, labs and field work to the real world. For example, students can gain hands-on experience at different farms and learn identification and management strategies of weeds, insects and diseases. They can gain the skills required to advise clients and help them collect data, learn about new products and increase their profitability.

#### What does an internship entail?

A typical internship during a fall or spring semester is 10-20 hours per week. During the summer, internships often range from 8-12 weeks, and students may work up to 40 hours depending on their availability. Internships may be paid, unpaid, for-credit or not for credit. Some employers offer housing or a housing allowance.

#### Developing an internship

The best place to get started is determining how an intern can fit with your business, identifying a mentor, considering compensation and creating a job description. For guidance, please see the attached [Employer Resource Guide](#) and contact Gigi Gauthier, Director of Internships, at 225-578-4489 or [ggauthier@lsu.edu](mailto:ggauthier@lsu.edu).

#### Finding an intern

Contact Gigi Gauthier to discuss your plans prior to the intern recruitment process. She helps students find internships related to their career interests, shares internship opportunities with LSU College of Agriculture Schools/Departments, and the LSU Olinde Career Center, and arranges for positions to be posted on the LSU College of Agriculture website.

By offering an internship, you are uniquely positioned to change a life, be the mentor you once had and help students chart their career direction, while attracting talent for your business.

## KEYWORD: NETWORKING



## Congratulations to our 2017 Scholarship Winners!!!

Dr. Mike Stout accepts a Doctoral scholarship on behalf of Emily Kraus who could not be present. Presenting and funding the scholarship was Dr. Dennis Long of AgBiTech.



Lina Bernaola accepts a Doctoral scholarship from Dr. Grady Coburn, representing Louisiana Land Bank, ACA

Dr. & Mrs. Grady (Barbara) Coburn of Pest Management Enterprises present Myra Purvis with a Masters scholarship.



Mr. and Mrs. Ray (Dorothy) Young, and Cullen Minter of RiceTec present Jorge Reyes Pineda with a Masters scholarship. Also co-



sponsoring the scholarship was Crop Production Services (CPS).

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)

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## 2018 LATMC Venue

Dear LACA Membership and Friends,

Our 2018 annual consultants' meeting, aka the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference will again be held in Marksville, LA at the Paragon Casino & Resort. While researching and negotiating for 2018, I determined it in our best interest to return to Paragon in 2018 and book a venue now for 2019 and 2020, as well, since it was not possible to book our meeting in a new and appropriate location on the dates we had selected for 2018. Your LACA Executive Board and I have agreed that, if possible, we will rotate between three locations, Marksville (Paragon Casino & Resort), Alexandria (Holiday Inn Downtown with overflow at Hotel Bentley), and Baton Rouge (Capital Hilton Downtown). I am currently making site visits and will do my best to choose the best locations for our future conferences. As always, I value your input, so if you have suggestions/recommendations, let me know...Denise

