



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association

Turn Row Talk

Winter Issue 2021

Volume 30

President's Column

Blaine Viator, Ph.D.

Calvin Viator, Ph.D. & Associates, LLC

As we all know, 2020 has been a challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic, global economy, and the political climate have put our society to the test to say the least. Everyone has been affected in some way or another. The passing of newly elected congressman Luke Letlow due to complications of the viral infection was one of the more tragic and impactful moments for Louisianans. At the young age of 41, leaving behind a spouse and young children, Representative-elect Letlow's passing sent feelings of shock and emotions throughout the agricultural community. Letlow's predecessor, Congressman Ralph Abraham, has been a champion and staunch supporter of Louisiana Agriculture in Washington. Letlow made it clear that his first goal would be to get elected to serve on the House Agricultural Committee once instated. Visiting Abraham's office with then Chief of Staff Luke Letlow was always one of the most impactful and meaningful meetings for myself and fellow NAICC members. Luke Letlow will be missed by all in Louisiana Agriculture, and I ask that we all keep his spouse and young children in our prayers.

On a personal note, our family was immensely proud of my father, Dr. Calvin Viator, for being inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction this year. Unfortunately, the induction ceremony had to be held virtually. The video put together by Craig Gautreaux, LSU Ag Center, was very well done and meant a great deal to our family. Dad made sure to emphasize LACA and its formerly inducted LACA members. Follow this link to watch his induction video <https://youtu.be/EwU4nKB6lXs>

Calvin Viator is inducted into the Louisiana Hall of Distinction



Allison and my daughter Gabrielle (G.G.) is a senior in high school and just turned 18. She has been playing volleyball since she was eight years old and loves the sport. Her high school team was headed to the playoffs and they had a good shot at going far. The week before playoffs began, one of the players tested positive for COVID-19, and their team had to forfeit the rest of the season. That was a hard pill to swallow for a high school senior; however, we have our health and so many more important things to be thankful for.

One of the bright sides of the pandemic has been that our son Luke, 15, is on an A/B schedule at his high school so he is off school every other day. Luke worked with us in the fields this summer learning different weeds/insect/disease pests. Now he can help collect soil samples on days he is off and caught up with schoolwork. I have genuinely enjoyed working with my son in the fields and teaching him the ropes. My dad and Paul Templet started me in the fields at this very same age.

Calvin Viator giving grandson, Luke, training on sweeping techniques





First morning planning meeting for Luke with the scouting team

As you all know, there is a steep learning curve in the field scouting part of agricultural consulting. Luke had to learn to effectively sweep soybeans while overcoming a height advantage of the crop.



Luke's first mishap of the summer on Louisiana turnrows

Another lesson Luke learned is that turn rows/headlands are often fraught with imperfections making navigation more difficult. We all laughed about his first mishap and reminisced that we all had done something similar over the years.



Tall soybeans can be a challenge for a short scout, but also useful for scouting crop pests in the lower canopy.

The LACA Board and our Executive Director Denise Wright have had many more challenges and obstacles to overcome outside of normal years. We were able to have our fall board meeting, as well as host the program planning meeting with researchers and LACA members on October 30th. Many good topics and speakers were developed during this meeting, thanks also to the Program Planning Committee, led by Jeremy Babin, LACA President-Elect. During this meeting and subsequent LACA board discussions, we had every intention of holding our annual meeting as scheduled, however with mandates given by Governor Edwards and being in the Phase 2 protocol, the Executive Board decided to let our voting members have the deciding vote on this matter. A large majority felt we should not host an in-person meeting, however, many felt we do need continuing education to be kept abreast of current issues we are dealing with in our agricultural consulting businesses. Denise will keep everyone updated, but for now we plan on hosting four separate crop specific webinars via Zoom during the February 10th-11th scheduled meeting dates. It is important to note that these virtual meetings will not be for recertification, but for informational purposes only.

In closing, I want to thank the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association for allowing me to serve a second term as President of our organization. In addition, I would like to thank our Executive Board members Jeremy Babin, Richard Costello, Hank Jones, Harold Lambert, Lucas Pitre, and Justin Turner, as well as our Board Liaisons Chad Nelson and Boyd Padgett for serving LACA.

And of course I cannot say enough about the hard work and dedication of our Executive Director, Denise Wright. We couldn't do this without you.

Jeremy Babin, President-Elect, will serve LACA well. Jeremy was trained by Mr. Paul Templet and has been a great consultant for the clients he serves, and has been a good asset to Calvin Viator, Ph.D. and Associates. I have always respected his knowledge of agronomy and common sense approach in assisting growers in producing a profitable crop. Jeremy is also very high up in rank at the Thibodaux Volunteer Fire Department. He somehow finds the time to do both agricultural consulting and public service, while he and his spouse Cherisse are raising two wonderful children, Claire and Andrew. It will be an honor for me to hand over the LACA reins to Jeremy.

We are hopeful in 2022 that we'll be able to hold our meeting in person, and get to see all of our LACA friends while learning about the current crop production issues and challenges from presenters. Let's hope 2020 "20/20" is truly hindsight, but 2021 may well be another roller coaster ride. Fortunately, anyone working in agriculture is inherently used to fluctuations due to Mother Nature, commodity prices, government policy, socioeconomics, etc. and have an amazing ability to rapidly adapt. Please stay safe in these difficult and uncertain times, and we'll keep you updated with details of the upcoming virtual sessions and future annual meetings.

Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship

Megan Mulcahy
2020 Recipient

I am not amiss in saying that you would be hard pressed to find anyone as dedicated to the Louisiana agricultural industry as Mr. Ray Young and his wife Ms. Dorothy. As the most recent recipient of the "Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Crop Integrated Pest Management", I can safely say that their continued support of students at the LSU College of Agriculture means so much from both an educational and professional development standpoint. The generosity of the Youngs and of LACA is so appreciated and I extend my heart-felt thanks for the recognition I have received. I am honored to have been selected for this award as it provides me with an opportunity to highlight some of the research I have been conducting since I started my Ph.D. in Entomology at LSU in 2017. My dissertation is focusing on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Louisiana rice and I am working under the advisership of Dr. Blake Wilson and Dr. Thomas E. Reagan. The main aim of my research is to improve the efficacy and sustainability of insecticidal seed treatments in accordance with better IPM principles. The information gathered in my dissertation will be used to improve the deployment of insecticidal seed treatments against major rice pests, such as the rice water weevil (RWW), *Lissorhoptrus oryzophilus*, the Mexican rice borer (MRB), *Eoreuma loftini* and the sugarcane borer (SCB), *Diatraea saccharalis*.

My dissertation includes specific goals that are designed to improve the use of insecticidal seed treatments in rice. Our first

goal was to assess the spatial distribution of rice pests in commercial fields. Using this information, we can investigate the potential of developing models for the precision targeting of insecticidal seed treatments. Using chemical treatments when and where they are needed, to directly manage insect pests, is a key objective in IPM that helps farmers save time and money. Remote sensing tools can be used to help farmers move towards precision agriculture. Thus, we are also evaluating the feasibility of using digital aerial imagery to estimate pest population densities. If successful, remote sensing technologies can help researchers and extension personnel scout for rice pests and determine whether they are being adequately controlled by insecticidal seed treatments. Improved monitoring of rice pests is necessary for the early detection of pesticide resistance, which is always a concern when using prophylactic chemical control tactics. Prevention of pesticide resistance in rice is another goal included in my dissertation. We are assessing larval susceptibility to insecticidal seed treatments in SCB populations to examine the potential for resistance development. We are also working to provide farmers with information on how to integrate insecticidal seed treatments with other pest control practices in rice. The use of alternative management practices is one means of reducing selective pressure on pests and is therefore a means of mitigating pesticide resistance. To provide the best recommendations possible we are currently conducting surveys amongst farmers, consultants, and extension personnel to identify regional trends in insecticide use and willingness to adopt integrated controls.

Although my research is focused on insect management in rice, I am relatively new to the crop. I am originally from South Africa, where we grow almost no rice! However, I have always been interested in agriculture. I grew up on my family's coastal sugarcane farm in Kwa-Zulu Natal near a region referred to as the "Valley of a Thousand Hills". As you can imagine, our sugarcane farm looked quite different to those found throughout Louisiana. I may come from a sugarcane background, but I have a keen interest in multiple agricultural commodities. To date I have worked on many different insect pests in numerous crops including cabbage, peppers, sugarcane, rice, sorghum and corn in both Southern Africa and the United States. This has allowed me to gain extensive field work experience, whilst also allowing me to work closely with farmers, researchers, extension agents, industry officials and other agricultural stakeholders from various backgrounds.

Being a "plaasmeisie" (Afrikaans for farm-girl) certainly gave me unique insights into the challenges faced by farmers on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, it is my philosophy that Ag research should work with and for farmers to solve pest problems in a manner that is sustainable, cost-effective and well-suited to their preferred farming practices. My experiences working with economically vulnerable sugarcane smallholders in South Africa taught me to be a creative, flexible researcher and to overcome boundaries in communication. These skills served me well during my time at the South African Sugarcane Research Institute and continue to help me in my current role as a researcher in rice pest management. I have worked on several commercial rice and sugarcane farms

throughout the state and I have attended numerous grower meetings and field days, including the annual LACA meeting in Marksville, LA. This has afforded me privilege of getting to know Louisiana and I hope to continue exploring this amazing state as I finish up my studies.

I am an adventurous, enthusiastic person who relishes new experiences and challenges. I chose to come to LSU because I love to travel, and to learn about new places and cultures. I may be thousands of miles away from my family, but I have found a happy home in the Entomology Department and at the rice research station in Crowley. They have fostered my interests and provided me with the chance to meet the most wonderful colleagues and friends. Under the guidance of faculty and staff I have completed four rice field seasons at the rice research station. I have been fortunate enough to present some of the data I have collected at national and international conferences in the United State and Canada, which has quite satiated my voracious travel bug. At all these events I have tried to fly the LSU flag high by participating in competitive debates and quizzes – Geaux Tigers! I have also tried to be involved as much as possible in the university to make the most of my opportunity to study abroad. It has been an absolute pleasure serving as President of the LSU Entomology Club, and as a Vice President for the International Cultural Centre on campus. Through these roles I have interacted with other Entomology students and faculty, with members of the international student body at LSU and with the greater Baton Rouge community through various outreach events. I have volunteered multiple times at AgMagic, the LSU Garden Show, Night at the Museum, NOLA BugFest, Insect Day at the Lafayette Science Museum and the Brec Bioblitz. I have also visited and taught at many local schools, scout meetings, and summer camps, and in events that promote women and girls in STEM disciplines. These outreach events have been extremely important to me. They have allowed me to speak to people of all ages about my love of science, insects, and agriculture and they have been a highlight of my university experience.

Studying in the United States has allowed me to grow so much as a scientist. I have been fortunate enough to collaborate with some truly gifted researchers, learn more about agriculture and to employ new research techniques. I hope to take in all these prospects and lessons and use them to improve farming practices in the United States and in areas where resources are not as freely available. I am not sure where my career will take me, but I look forward to a future in agricultural research. Whether I continue to work in the U.S. or in South Africa, my goal as an LSU AgCenter student is to help bridge the gap between science, extension and producers, by providing useful information to stakeholders and ensuring the profitable production of crops.



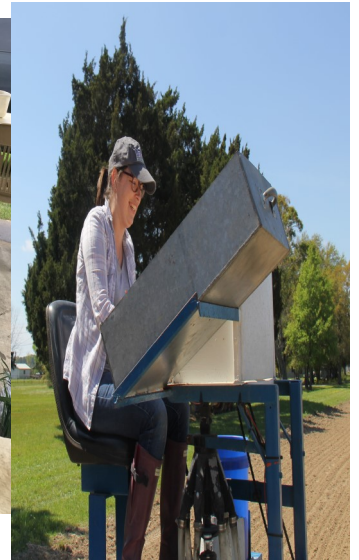
A drone image showing research plots at the Crowley rice research station.



Looking for stem borer damage in Louisiana sugarcane makes for sweaty work!



Processing rice core samples to determine weevil densities in our rice research plots.



Planting rice for my IPM field trials in Crowley, LA.



Rice station student workers helping me collect stem borer data on a rather stormy day.

Beautiful South Africa



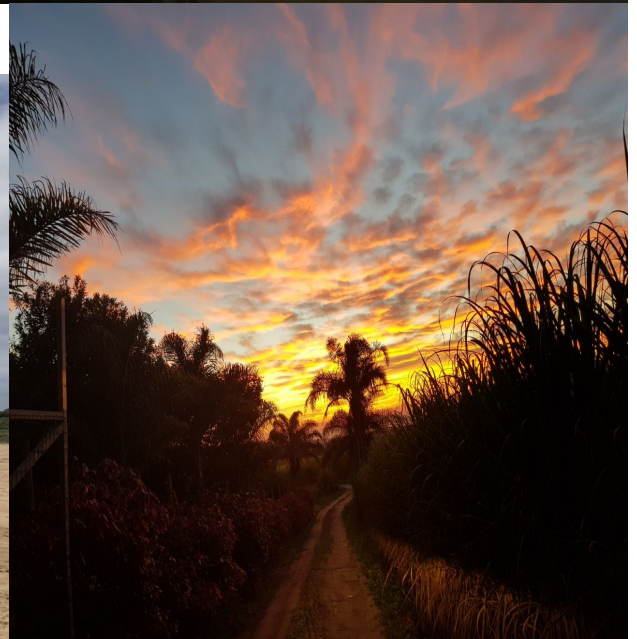
Rolling hills of sugarcane at Dumayo farm where I grew up.



In South Africa, sugarcane is typically harvested by hand. Farmers still burn their sugarcane before harvesting to make the task a little easier for farm workers.



A picture of Clansthal beach, which is located just a few minutes away from our farm.



The African sun setting over my family's sugarcane farm in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.



Covid-19 and trade are currently top of the mind of every farmer in America. As we make the hard decisions of what crop to plant and how many acres to produce, we must carefully analyze the flood of information re-

lated to every economic report and every trade deal. The negotiations with China, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the South Korean Free Trade Agreement, the European Union, India, the Pacific Rim and many others are paying off, but we must continue to push forward especially now as China and the eastern nations have just concluded a pact representing over one-third of the world's economy.

As I write this article, the Dow Jones Index, the Nasdaq, and the S&P indices have hit all-time highs. Oil and other commodities are rebounding in price, and China, Mexico, and Japan are making record purchases of corn, soybeans, and other commodities. Additionally, over 450 thousand barrels of West Texas Intermediate crude is being delivered to Europe on a daily basis.

It is imperative that we must maintain our position in world trade and utilize every opportunity to advance technologically to continue to dominate the world agricultural stage.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization world food supply report, last year food production barely met or was surpassed by consumption as detailed below:

Wheat – Production: 762.7 Million Metric Ton (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 MMT; Consumption: 335,471 MMT

Poultry – Production: 137,118 MMT; Consumption: 135,779 MMT

Additionally, with federal, state, and private climate change policies and initiatives, we must direct and embrace each opportunity to positively enhance production utilizing every incentive that is practical and profitable. We continue to emphasize that agriculture is the solution to air pollution and that we are the front line for sequestering carbon dioxide, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur and other greenhouse gases in our crops and forests.

Again, the demands of the world markets cannot be met without the full participation of American agriculture. We have unprecedented opportunities ahead to fully participate in the future global trading network and command a major portion of this business.

We can achieve substantial increases in sequestration by utilization of cover crops, no-till drilling, more intense management of our forests, and a host of land based practices.

In order for us to participate to our fullest capacity, we must continue to embrace all current and emerging technologies and invest heavily in education, job training, and infrastructure. In conjunction with Governor John Bel Edwards' task forces and councils on resiliency, rural revitalization, climate initiatives, and economic development we have initiated such as the Agricultural Workforce Development Program, we are also investing in industrial facilities in rural Louisiana and our ports. After many years of planning and construction, these projects are now coming on line and will result in marked improvements in our ability to compete nationally and worldwide.

There will be changes in Washington next year. We must all embrace change as an opportunity to advance agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, and rural development. Each of us must develop new relationships and strengthen the old ones and continue to push forward. By next year, we hope Covid-19 will be behind us and the economy will be poised to flourish.

Mike Strain, DVM
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2021 Pesticide Recertification Options

2020 Recap

2020 has presented challenges in many different ways. With the shut-down early last year, many pesticide applicators were not able to recertify their pesticide certifications. Those private pesticide applicators that were not able to attend a training were granted a year extension. Commercial pesticide applicators were extended until other options became available. The LSU AgCenter Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) worked with the Louisiana Department of Agricultural and Forestry Pesticide Division to develop an alternative option for recertification.

The LSU AgCenter IT supports Microsoft Teams as part of Microsoft 365 that has similar capabilities to Zoom and WebEx. Through this program, the LSU AgCenter PSEP was able to host participants on live-virtual training sessions. This allowed for participants to remain at home while the LSU AgCenter PSEP provided training on pesticide safety education. This training avenue became very successful. As part of the live-virtual training sessions, quizzes are given throughout the duration to make sure that people are staying involved in the training process. These quizzes are given through Microsoft Forms.

Additionally, the LSU AgCenter PSEP worked to provide in-person recertification opportunities for applicators. As the year progressed, we were able to go back to limited in-person training. This was necessary to provide training to those that do not have the technological capabilities or internet access to attend virtual training. From July – Dec 2020 the LSU AgCenter PSEP provided or participated in 6 virtual recertification trainings and 7 in-person recertification trainings.

2021 Options

As we have been planning for 2021, the LSU AgCenter PSEP would like provide as many opportunities as possible for applicators to safely recertify their pesticide certifications. This includes both commercial, governmental, and private pesticide applicators. At this time, there will be both live-virtual and in-person recertification trainings. The LSU AgCenter will follow state guidelines for maximum indoor capacity and require people to wear masks and social distance during in-person trainings.

For Private Pesticide Applicators training will still be completed January 1 – March 31. In-person options will be handled by the local county agents in each parish. Be sure to check the date on your card to determine if you need to be recertified before March 31, 2021. In addition to in-person training for Private Pesticide Applicators, the LSU AgCenter PSEP will be providing virtual opportunities for those that do not feel comfortable attending an in-person training. These live-virtual trainings will begin January 6 and be every other Wednesday through March 31.

For commercial, governmental and agricultural consultants, many of the association meetings are planning to take place as normal. For those that do not feel comfortable attending an in-person meeting, the LSU AgCenter PSEP will have virtual options available.

For the 2021 recertification season applicators can plan to attend either in-person or live-virtually. The live-virtual recertification event will be hosted on Microsoft TEAMS. Those that plan to attend the training virtually must have a camera on their device to show that you are participating and will have to complete random quizzes throughout the training to confirm participation. They must also, plan to attend an equipment check prior to the recertification event to make sure that they are set up and ready to attend the virtual training.

For in-person training, social distancing and masks will be required. In-person training will be capped at 60 people at this time. This is based on the current state requirements for Covid-19.

The training dates are January 26th and February 25th and will begin at 8:00 AM and end at approximately 4:00 PM. Box lunches will be provided to those that attend the training in-person.

Virtual Training Details:

Virtual training will be conducted live, in an online format through Microsoft TEAMS. Applicators who are planning to participate in virtual recertification and have pre-registered must have an email address and access to the internet. You will receive an email the Monday prior to the meeting with an invitation and instructions. All participants in the virtual recertification must attend a virtual technology check the Monday day prior to the event at 9:00 AM to make sure that everything works properly. This will help reduce issues during the training event. Applicators must have a camera for LDAF to monitor participation in the event. In addition to the camera, participants will be given simple quiz questions throughout the event to assist in monitoring participation.

When registering for the event, please provide your LDAF card number and what parish you are located in.

The LSU AgCenter will continue to offer in-person recertification opportunities in each parish. Those dates can be found by contacting your local county agent or at: www.agcenter.lsu.edu/pesticide in the Private Applicator section. At an in-person training event, attendees will be required to social distance and wear face masks. These guidelines will be in place to keep everyone as safe as possible. Each in-person meeting location will have a maximum number of attendees that the location can handle while meeting state indoor gathering requirements. Please make sure that you pre-register for whichever meeting you plan to attend. If you are not able to attend a virtual or an in-person recertification event, LDAF does allow for recertification by re-testing in each certification category.

For more information please contact the LSU AgCenter Pesticide Safety Education Program or the Louisiana Department of Agriculture.



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Truth & Humor from Fifty Years of

Consulting

Roger Carter
East Bay Navarre, FL

I felt honored when Denise texted me and asked me to contribute to this newsletter. It has been over eight years since I last wrote an article or wrote AMS's newsletter, The Disk Opener. Denise stated that I could write about whatever was on my mind, but she immediately rescinded that when I asked if she wanted me to write about food...or sex. Humor was my next option. As with many of you, I have witnessed many humorous things over the years. I may have written about some of these before, so please forgive me if you have already read some of these true stories.

We had a young man named Cary Shively who worked for us one summer. Cary was one of the most thorough scouts who ever worked for AMS. I noticed that his counts for small worms were always much higher than every other scout, yet his worm egg counts were consistently lower. I asked Coach about that one day and he said, "Roger, Cary finds as many worm eggs as everyone else, but he just stares at them long enough for them to hatch, therefore he has higher small worm counts." I never tried to change Cary's methods after hearing that.

Cary also was the type of person who took everything we said literally. As we all know, cotton grown under a pivot is more lush and, therefore, more attractive to moths to lay eggs. As I let Cary out in a field that had a pivot on it, I reminded Cary to make certain he got counts from cotton that was under the pivot. The pivot was not running when I let Cary out, but when I returned, the pivot was running; and, yep, there was Cary, soaked to the bone, standing directly under where the pivot was running. I did explain to Cary when he dried off that he only needed to scout the cotton where the pivot would normally run because of the lush cotton there. And from then on I learned to give better instructions.

Not all of the humor occurred in the fields. While attending a NAICC Board Meeting in DC, it was customary to meet for lunch with various individuals or groups. We were scheduled to meet with the Ag Retailers Association group at the Monmouth Restaurant. Mr. Ray Young and I had been joined at the hip all morning while visiting Congressmen and Senators, a task that would have been overwhelming for this country boy if it were not for the fact that I was partnered with one of my best friends. As we entered the upstairs private room at the restaurant, we were introduced to the ARA representatives. One of them was a drop-dead gorgeous green-eyed, blonde-headed lady, whose name I have conveniently forgotten. We were serving ourselves at the buffet. Phil Cochran, one of our Board

members, had placed his briefcase in the chair beside where this beautiful lady was sitting; Phil then got in line behind Mr. Ray in the buffet. I was in front of Mr. Ray. I asked Mr. Ray where he would like to sit. He said we could sit at the very end of the table so we could discuss who we were visiting in the afternoon and what we would discuss with them. I took my plate and sat near the end of the table per Mr. Ray's request. When Mr. Ray left the buffet and headed towards me; he began to sit down in the chair next to me, but looked up, saw the pretty lady. Even before his pants disrupted the dust on the chair seat he proceeded to pick up his plate, move around the table, move Phil's briefcase, and extended his hand to the lovely lass, "How do, ma'am". I'm Ray Young from Wisner, LA". There I was sitting all alone at the end of the table until Phil Cochran joined me in the "Too Trusting of a Friend End of the table." Moral of the story for me is to "never trust a friend who is the consummate **Southern gentleman** when a **pretty lady** is involved." And, the quickest elder gentlemen get to sit next to the pretty girls. As many of you do, I've got many Ray Young true stories. And many more Dorothy Young true stories.

I've also got a true story about my great friend, Dr. Grady Coburn. As most of you know, Grady and I both flirt (innocently and Southern-style) with pretty ladies. We were attending a NAICC XB meeting in DC in the late 90's. Lise' and I and Grady and Barbara had stayed an extra night due to flight schedules. We all four decided to dine together that night at one of DC's more upscale restaurants that served family style home cooking. We were being served by a beautiful young lady from North Carolina. She was as nice as nice can be. That "Southern" kind of nice. And she was flirting (innocently and Southern-style) as much with us as Grady and I were with her. Of course, Barbara & Lise' have watched Grady and I make fools of ourselves more than once; they just sat back and watched although I did feel someone kick my shin a time or two. About halfway through our meal, Grady was getting the better of me on the "flirting". The young lady told Grady, "You remind me of someone I've truly loved all my life." Grady's eyes gleamed, he smiled, and asked, "OH, is that right? Who?" She responded, "My GRANDPA". I almost spit out my sweet tea. That response was classic and I paid for the meal and gave her a very generous tip. She made the trip to DC worthwhile.

It was once said (probably many more times) that I never heard a great story that I could not improve upon. And that I would embellish a good true story. In all honesty, I have not embellished any of these true stories. I've only tried to use more colorful language in order to better visualize the actual events.

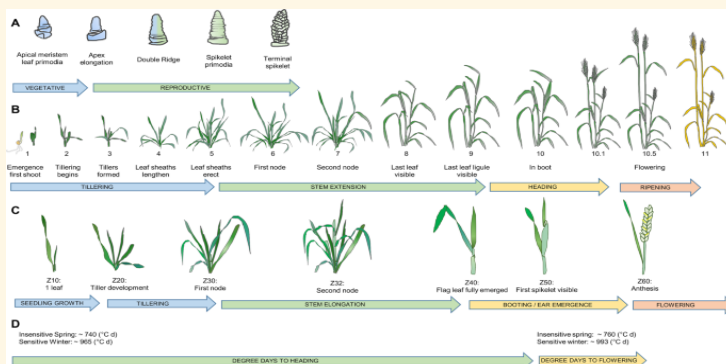
Wheat Fertilization

Boyd Padgett, LSU AgCenter Interim Wheat Specialist
Steve Harrison, LSU AgCenter Wheat Breeder

Nitrogen (N) fertilization of wheat can be a challenging aspect of production. Total N application should normally range from 90 to 120 pounds per acre, but this will vary depending on the previous crop, soil type and rainfall after application(s). Timing N application depends on several factors. The wheat crop needs adequate N in the fall and early winter to establish ground cover and properly tiller; however, excessive levels of fall N can result in rank growth which increases lodging potential, as well as a higher risk to spring freeze damage due to early heading. If the wheat crop is following soybeans, soil residual or mineralizable N should be adequate for fall growth, and no pre-plant N is needed. However, if the wheat crop follows corn, sorghum, rice or cotton, the application of 15 to 20 pounds of N per acre would typically be beneficial. Where the wheat crop is planted later than the optimum date, additional N may be necessary to ensure adequate fall growth prior to winter conditions. If the wheat crop did not receive a fall application and appears to be suffering from N deficiency in January, the initial topdress N application can be made early to promote additional tillering. Early spring is when the majority of N for the wheat crop should be applied. There is no universal rule on how early spring N should be applied. Each field should be evaluated based on tillering, stage of development, environmental conditions and crop color. A crop that has good growth and good color should not need N fertilization prior to erect leaf sheath (Feekes 5), usually sometime in early to mid-February. However, first spring fertilizer application should be applied prior to first node (Feekes 6) to ensure optimum head development, tiller retention and head size. **Crop N stress around jointing (Feekes 6) will result in yield loss.** Any additional N applied following flag leaf typically contributes very little to crop yield. Splitting topdress N into two or three applications is common in Louisiana production systems due to the increased risk of N losses often associated with heavy rainfall and our long growing season. Splitting N typically occurs by applying fertilizer N at or just prior to jointing with a second application occurring 14 to 28 days later. About 50 percent of the topdress N is normally applied with the first split, but this may be decreased if the first split is put out early and plants are not well enough developed to take up that much N.

Phosphorus, K, and micronutrients should be applied in the fall based on soil test reports. All fertilizers applied as well as lime should be incorporated into the soil prior to planting. Required lime should be applied pre-plant because it takes time for the lime to begin to neutralize the acidity of most soils. The application of sulfur is a growing concern in Louisiana production. Early spring sulfur (S) deficiency is sometimes mistaken for N

deficiency and additional S is not applied. Because sulfur is mobile, similar to N, the application solely in the fall will not be adequate. Supplemental applications of S with the first spring N applications are often warranted.



LATMC 2021

Happy New Year, Everyone!!! My wish for all of you is Happiness, Good Health, Safety, and Prosperity in this new year, 2021!!! I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season as much as possible, given the precautions we are all so used to taking now in these unprecedented times.

I wanted to include this brief piece to let you all know that we will not be having an in-person annual consultants' meeting this year, even though plans had been made to hold your meeting in a new venue, the Randolph Riverfront Center in downtown Alexandria on the Red River. After much discussion and careful consideration, the LACA Executive Board, with the help of the voting membership, has made the very difficult decision to cancel this year's meeting, or at least as we're accustomed to attending it. As you all know, Covid-19 cases have increased dramatically in Louisiana over the past month or so, and we have even lost those near and dear to us. Please keep the Letlow and Kifer families in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve the loss of their loved ones. Sad to say, I'm sure there are others you know who have lost their lives due to complications caused by this virus. We need to pray daily for those who have been left behind to deal with the loss of loved ones tragically taken by this dreaded pandemic. Never in my lifetime could I have imagined that we'd be having to deal with this, as well as other extreme adversities, for want of a better word...

As you all know, we have recently been put under a Modified Phase 2 Order by Governor John Bel Edwards which only allows for 25% capacity or 75 people, whichever is less, in one meeting room, no matter the size. Just recently, the governor extended this order through February 10th, which was to be the first day of our conference. The Randolph Riverfront Center was bound by the Fire Marshal to adhere to these strict regulations, and after much discussion and careful consideration of all aspects, good and bad, the LACA Executive Board decided to include the entire voting membership in the decision of whether or not to try to rearrange our meeting to make it work with the smaller numbers or to cancel the in-person meeting and discuss possibly holding some or all of the

annual meeting in some virtual fashion. The decision came back from the voting membership very close to being unanimous...the decision was to cancel our in-person meeting. I can tell you that no one is more disappointed than yours truly, the LACA Executive Board, and our hardworking Program Planning Committee, but we all knew it was the right thing to do given these hard circumstances. I, for one, would have been devastated had anyone become ill at or after attending the LATMC, and I'm sure you would all agree that this was the right thing to do.

The LACA Executive Board met this morning, Friday, January 22, 2021 via our first Zoom meeting and decided to hold virtual crop-specific sessions or as Zoom refers to them, webinars. We will be working diligently for the next two and a half weeks setting these sessions up to run as smoothly as possible. We have acquired the services of an expert since Moi is anything but when it comes to this technology, and time is of the essence. Speakers who were slated to present in the different breakout sessions of the in-person meeting are being asked to participate in the virtual meeting, as well as some of the speakers in the general session who have more agronomic presentations. Four virtual sessions, Soybeans and Grain Crops, Cotton and Multi-Crops, Sugarcane, and Rice will be offered over the course of the two originally scheduled days, February 10-11, 2021. Once the specific sessions and times have been decided on, an email with Agenda and registration information will be sent to all. There will be a small fee associated with each session to cover setup and administration costs. These sessions are for continuing education purposes and will not recertify commercial applicators nor consultants. Most consultants attend the LATMC every year to receive continuing education, and therefore, recertify every year, so most are in good standing. If you find yourself needing to recertify before our in-person meeting in 2022, the LSU AgCenter is offering recertification opportunities on January 26th and February 25th, 2021 only. Please contact Kim Brown, LSU AgCenter, Pesticide Safety Education Coordinator, at kbrown@agcenter.lsu.edu for more information.

Regarding the LACA Business Meeting that occurs at our annual meeting each year, information will be forthcoming soon to all LACA members. Discussions are currently being held by the Executive Board as to how to handle matters concerning the business usually voted on during this meeting, including election of board members and the Nominating Committee. Members, please be watching your email for further details.

Likewise, everyone, please keep an eye out for details regarding the upcoming virtual sessions. Time is fast approaching, and information regarding registration will be coming soon, as well as a condensed program agenda. I hope that as many of you as can will take advantage of this learning opportunity to benefit you and your growers this crop season.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU for your past and continued support of the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association. I will truly miss seeing each and everyone one of you this year and hope we can be back together in 2022!!!

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