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Left to right are: kneeling, brothers Michael and Nicholas Zaunbrecher; standing, brothers Dwayne and Doug Zaunbrecher, Keith Rockett and son Jonathan Rockett.

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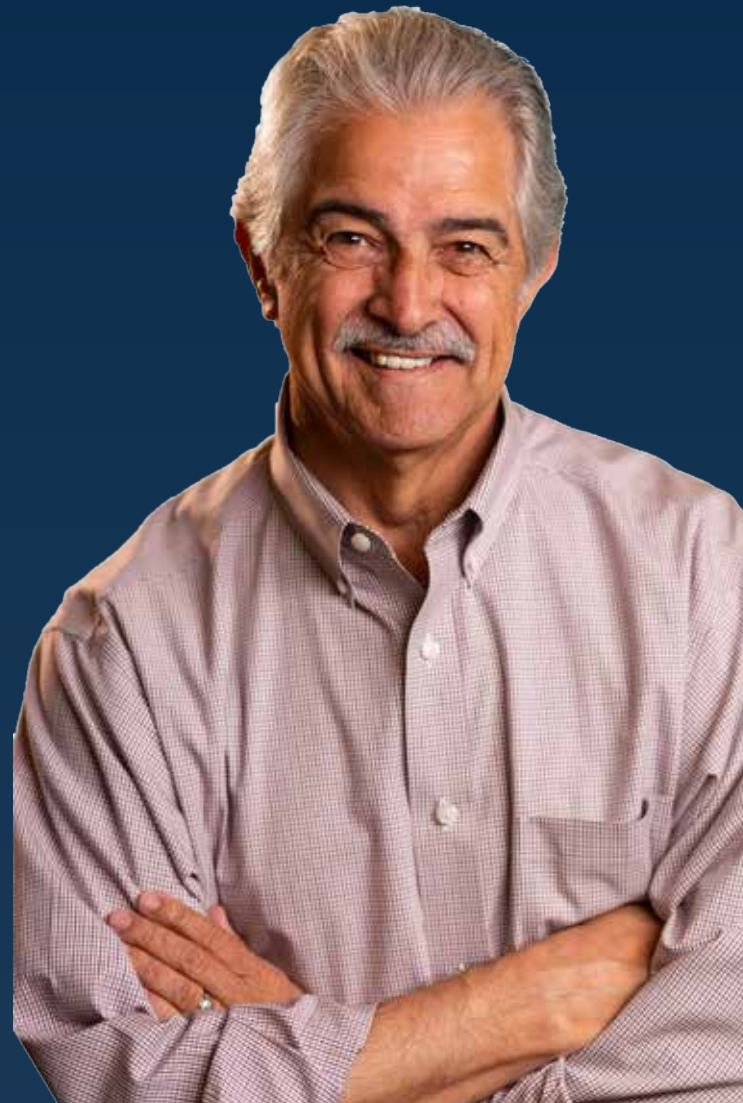
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Louisianans: Rebounding, recovering, and growing



Jim Harper
President, Louisiana
Farm Bureau
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Rebounding, recovering, and growing from disasters is nothing new for us Louisianans.

We have been on the world stage through natural disasters and have always come out better and stronger together on the other side. Now is a time for leadership among all the uncertainty.

Early in the COVID-19 Pandemic, many consumers were alarmed when their grocery store shelves were limited, or even empty of many products. So, as food and fiber producers, how are we going to use this spotlight to come out better in the post-COVID world?

Farmers knew there was a supply chain behind the grocery store that was still plentiful, safe, and affordable. However, consumers became confused and concerned when supplies of

paper products ran low and meat counters were temporarily empty.

We saw how quickly those supply chains adapted to overcome the challenges this coronavirus threw our way, and farmers also adapted their business to meet the need. Many of my friends in the livestock industry increased local processing and direct-to-consumer sales. Farmers markets found creative ways to provide newly-interested customers a socially-distant service to find local, tasty and nutritious food.

There have been several challenges in the meat processing supply chain. By doing what we do best, Louisiana Farm Bureau's legislative team is working to find solutions to these hurdles through policy actions that would increase the capacity of local processing, while maintaining the integrity of our food safety systems.

We also are working to connect to our members who provide local products and sell food products directly to their consumers. Farm Bureau represents farms and ranches of all size, so don't feel like your operation is too small to be heard.

The consumer is ultimately the fuel to our

engine, so we are also continuing efforts to educate them about the producers who work to keep those grocery shelves full. Farm Bureau is looking at this time of consumer interest in where their food comes from, as an opportunity for their education.

If this pandemic shows us nothing else, we should see how agriculture is still essential, even if it's only as strong as the essential people who show up to provide for our nation every day. While I am new in my role as your Farm Bureau President, I have seen time and time again that when things get tough, farmers step up. When things break down, the agriculture community finds a way to keep moving forward. Thank you for staying strong and working through these uncertain times.

No matter if it's policy, networking, or education, what ideas do you have to bring to the table? If you have suggestions on how we could innovate and adapt to these pandemic related challenges, or any issue facing agriculture, please make your voice heard.

As they say – let's not let a disaster go to waste. 🇺🇸

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*Jim Simon
 General Manager
 American
 Sugarcane League*

Research and good policy pave way for sugarcane

Dr. Calvin Viator, a New Iberia crop consultant, was honored earlier this month when he was inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction. Agricultural luminaries James Barnett of Pineville, John Denison, Iowa; and Jay Hardwick of Newellton were also inducted. All have made significant

contributions to Louisiana agriculture but Dr. Viator's dedication to Louisiana sugarcane is one of the reasons why sugarcane has remained the top crop in the state for more than 200 hundred years.

It is because of people like Dr. Viator that sugarcane is fulfilling a potential that few thought possible in 1922 when the American Sugar Cane League was formed. Back then, sugarcane was on its last legs in the Bayou State as the mosaic disease had all but wiped out the crop. Enterprising sugarcane producers got together and enlisted the help of the United States Department of Agriculture and Louisiana State University to study the science needed to defeat the dreaded plant disease.

Within a few years, sugarcane had rebounded, and the League began to look at other ways to ensure the Louisiana sugarcane industry would remain viable as a supplier of sugar for the United States. A strong U.S. domestic sugar policy was needed.

In the 21st century, U.S. sugar consumption is supplied by three sugarcane growing states and 11 sugar beet growing states. Altogether, there are 28 states with sugarcane/sugarbeet farms, cane mills, cane refineries, sugarbeet factories and sugar distribution centers. Nationally, the sugar industry supports more than 142,000 jobs and contributes \$20 billion to the American economy. In Louisiana, the sugarcane industry supports more than 16,000 jobs and has a \$3 billion boost to the state economy. What's truly remarkable is state farmers continue to produce successful crops even though they get the same price for their sugar as their grandfathers got in 1980.

How are Louisiana's sugarcane farmers and millers able to stay in business? Because of the efficiencies created by scientists/consultants like Dr. Calvin Viator and the hundreds of other researchers who have made

SEE RESEARCH, NEXT PAGE

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Pat Miller, Owner/Operator

Louisiana's sugarcane industry the envy of the world.

Right now, farmers are in the field planting sugarcane for the 2021 crop. In mid-September they will begin harvest of an estimated 16 million tons of sugarcane. Weather, always an unknown challenge, caused the 2019 crop to falter, but farmers are optimistic the 2020 crop will rebound. What is known is that sugarcane has been a stable commodity over the years because we've worked to improve our yields through science and technology. We provide a safe and reliable source of domestic sugar for America and government support for the sugar industry does not cost the taxpayer one penny.

So, congratulations to Dr. Viator. He's done a tremendous job for Louisiana sugarcane, not only by improving the crop, but by educating the hundreds of younger scientists who are coming up. With people like Dr. Viator looking out for agriculture, I think we're in good hands. 🇺🇸

Commissioner Strain applauds USDA Secretary for adding more eligible commodities for CFAP

Crawfish now eligible for CFAP direct payments

BATON ROUGE - Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Mike Strain, D.V.M., said the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today that additional commodities are covered by the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) in response to public comments and data.

The USDA is also extending the deadline to apply for the program to Sept. 11, 2020.

"When the COVID-19 pandemic hit this spring right at the peak of crawfish season, crawfish producers felt the impact immediately," Strain said.

"Since CFAP was first announced in May, we have been working with the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, the LSU AgCenter and our congressional delegation to add crawfish to CFAP eligibility. After significant research and data collection which was supplied to Washington, crawfish is now eligible for direct payments under the CFAP. I commend USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue for acting quickly to include crawfish in CFAP direct payment eligibility," Strain said.

The program is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

USDA collected comments and supporting data for consideration of additional commodities through June

22, 2020. The following additional commodities are now eligible for CFAP:

- Specialty Crops - aloe leaves, bananas, batatas, bok choy, carambola (star fruit), cherimoya, chervil (french parsley), citron, curry leaves, daikon, dates, dill, donqua (winter melon), dragon fruit (red pitaya), endive, escarole, filberts, frisee, horseradish, kohlrabi, kumquats, leeks, mamey sapote, maple sap (for maple syrup), mesculin mix, microgreens, nectarines, parsley, persimmons, plantains, pomegranates, pummelos, pumpkins, rutabagas, shallots, tangelos, turnips/celeriac, turmeric, upland/winter cress, water cress, yautia/malanga, and yuca/cassava.
- Non-Specialty Crops and Livestock - liquid eggs, frozen eggs and all sheep. Only lambs and yearlings (sheep less than two years old) were previously eligible.
- Aquaculture - catfish, crawfish, largemouth bass and carp sold live as foodfish, hybrid striped bass, red drum, salmon, sturgeon, tilapia, trout, ornamental/tropical fish, and recreational sportfish.
- Nursery Crops and Flowers - nursery crops and cut flowers.

Additional details can be found in the Federal Register in the Notice of Funding Availability and Final Rule Correction and at www.farmers.gov/cfap. 🇺🇸

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Sugarcane field day held in virtual format

ST. GABRIEL, La. — The current pandemic is causing many changes in the way the LSU AgCenter conducts business, but getting information to those who need it has not.

The annual sugarcane field day couldn't be held face-to-face as usual, but the researchers at the LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station found a way to reach their target audience.

LSU AgCenter entomologist Blake Wilson explained the progress of his research on the sugarcane borer.

"We need high pest populations to get meaningful results," he said. "Recent analysis of a nearly 20-year-old dataset shows that since the early 2000s, sugarcane borer populations along with insecticide use in sugarcane has declined by about 50 percent."

This is attributed to a successful integrated pest management program, and Wilson noted three reasons for this decline.

"First is the introduction of the combine harvester in the 1990s, which harvests cleaner," he said. "Second is the replacement of the highly susceptible LCP-384 variety with more-resistant varieties, which are now planted on more than 60 percent of our sugarcane acreage. And



LSU AgCenter plant pathologist Jeff Hoy speaking at a past sugarcane field day. This year, the event was held in a virtual format due to the coronavirus pandemic. Photo by Johnny Morgan/LSU AgCenter

lastly, the replacement of pyrethroids with more biological control efforts."

Wilson is also monitoring the Mexican rice borer in some off-station locations. Other off-site research is looking at pest such as the West Indian cane fly, he said.

AgCenter soil scientist Brenda Tubaña discussed the soil fertility research she is conducting in sugarcane.

To decrease financial losses to the growers, Tubaña's research looks that the rate of fertilizer application along with different sources and delivery methods.

"There are 17 essential nutrients that we can talk about, but today we just want to talk about nitrogen," she said. "The nitrogen cycle is very dynamic, which makes it one of the most difficult nutrients to manage."

The recommendation to cane growers is to apply 60 to 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre to avoid deficiency in the plants and to avoid yield losses, she said.

Tubaña and her graduate students are using sensors to determine where nitrogen is needed to avoid unnecessary applications.

AgCenter weed scientist Al Orgeron said because sugarcane is a perennial, and it is hard to control other perennial weeds in the crop once they become established.

"Some of these weeds that we struggle with are bermudagrass, Johnsongrass and nutsedge," he said. "The fallow period is the ideal time to try to

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manage these weed pests. This is where we make our largest strides, and it is the foundation of our weed management program.”

Growers have several options to control weeds during the fallow period, including cultivation and the application of glyphosate herbicides.

“When you spray glyphosate on a cane field, you’ll need to wait up to 10 days before you cultivate,” Orgeron said. “This gives the chemical time to translocate throughout the bermudagrass plant.”

Orgeron said glyphosate-tolerant soybeans are a great option for fallow-field production because they provide a better opportunity to control Johnsongrass and itchgrass. And it can also provide some extra income.

Sugarcane breeder Collins Kimbeng discussed some of the work that goes on in the variety development program that many growers may not be aware of.

“Genetic variation is the most important ingredient in any variety development program,” he said. “We create the variation by shuffling the genes in the male and female plants.”

Kimbeng said it is a long process to get from the beginning processes in plant breeding to the developed variety. But it all begins with a single seed or seedling.

Plant breeder Michael Pontiff discussed the development of the latest AgCenter sugarcane variety.

“Our latest variety, Ho 13-739, has taken 12 years to develop, and we voted unanimously to accept it mainly because of the early sugar production,” he said. “It also has good tonnage and is resistant to both smut and leaf scald.”

After the Nov. 13 freeze in 2019, Ho13-739 proved to be cold tolerant, unlike some of the older varieties.

AgCenter plant pathologist Jeff Hoy is looking for ways to manage disease through the introduction of resistant varieties.

“The field test that we do, even the greenhouse tests, are costly in terms of space and time. And they tend to be erratic,” he said. “Variable environmental conditions can affect the outcome.”

Hoy and his team have begun looking at a new technology that uses molecular markers to identify disease resistance.

“Yield is the No. 1 priority for the industry,” Hoy said. “Yield is also the No. 2 and No. 3 priority.”


AgCenter plant molecular biolo-

gist and geneticist Niranjana Baisakh said the main goal of his research is to devise molecular tools to complement the sugarcane breeding program.

“The first thing we want to do is to determine the genetic diversity in the sugarcane varieties that are already present in Louisiana sugarcane,” he said.

Selection of varieties by what is seen in the field can be deceiving because environmental conditions may not allow for the expression of a certain disease or trait.

The virtual field day also included talks by Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture; Mike Salassi, AgCenter associate vice president for plant and animal sciences; Jim Simon, general manager of the American Sugar Cane League; and Mike Strain, commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

The internet presentations at this year’s virtual sugarcane field day are available at www.LSUAgCenter.com/sugarcaneFieldDay. Viewers are also able to watch the presentations on YouTube. 

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A work in progress

After inheriting a ranch on the Bossier Parish and Webster Parish line from her father, Sonja Vice and her brother struck out to address some of the resource concerns on the land but did not know where to turn for help. After encouragement from her son, Sonja visited the Bodcau Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Bossier City NRCS office for assistance.

A first-time customer of USDA, Vice worked with the Farm Services Agency (FSA) to obtain a farm and tract number. Once that process was complete, she immediately began working with Andrea Bridgewater, District Conservationist in the Bossier City Field Office and Cindy Beard, Area Civil Engineering Technician to get a conservation plan for her land and begin addressing the resource concerns on her ranch. After getting started on her conservation journey in Louisiana, Vice contacted the District Conservationists in Panola and Rusk Counties in Texas to begin the journey there as well.

The land she inherited in Louisiana is approximately 1,890 acres of primarily pasture and loblolly forest. The pasture stays wet a large portion of the year which makes grazing cattle difficult, which is why she made initial contact with the Bodcau SWCD and NRCS, hoping that her drainage problems could be improved. However, the land has very little fall and no good outlet to take

the water off of her ranch. In addition, road ditches are not adequate. Although NRCS was unable to address the drainage issue, other resource concerns were identified and the work to address them began.

“When my dad passed away and I inherited this land, I was overwhelmed and needed help. I am glad I found NRCS. It is because of the professionals on the staff there that I have been able to accomplish so much,” says Vice.

She currently has 167 head of beef cattle consisting of Hereford, Brahma, Longhorns and Angus, grazing on this property in Bossier Parish. To improve the conditions of the pastureland, Vice utilized financial assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to install cross-fencing, watering facilities, livestock pipeline, brush management, herbaceous weed control and heavy-use protection areas. Since she has completed the recommended improvements through EQIP, she is now applying for additional financial assistance through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to plant pollinator habitat on the riparian borders of her forested acres.

Already a Master Cattleman, Bridgewater



Sonja Vice (landowner) and Andrea Bridgewater (NRCS District Conservationist).

encouraged Vice to become a Certified Louisiana Master Farmer. “She was already doing additional things on her land and had attended many educational courses to help her enhance production and profitability, so attending additional educational opportunities to help her further address environmental issues on her land to become a Louisiana Master Farmer was a natural fit,” stated Bridgewater. Vice received her certification in January 2020.

“I believe that if you are going to do something, that you do it to the best of your ability. You must be fully knowledgeable about all aspects of your operation and the different ways to improve it,” said Vice. “You can never learn too much.”

One might ask if there are future plans for



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additional conservation practices on her ranch? If you know Sonja, then you know the answer is a definite YES! She has been working with NRCS's State Forester, Rick Williams, and Area Forester, Wayne Roberts, along with a consultant forester to come up with a management plan for the forested acreage at the ranch that includes benefits for the trees, soil and the cattle.

After seeing a story on "This Week in Louisiana Agriculture" on David Daigle's operation in Beauregard and Allen Parish, Vice knew that a silvopasture system is the next conservation technique she would like to use. For those that don't know, silvopasture systems are specifically designed and managed to produce trees, forage and livestock all on the same acreage. To accomplish this, Vice will conduct a commercial thinning to reduce the density of the pine trees allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor. Additionally, she will install conservation practices such as forest stand improvement, prescribed burning and prescribed grazing.

The process of creating some areas of silvopasture are underway. Selected areas of pine trees have been marked with paint to identify the trees that need to be removed. "Ms. Vice's property sets up extremely well for silvopasture. She has pine stands adjoining her pastures that can be selectively thinned to promote a more robust understory of herbaceous vegetation. The conservation practices identified will greatly enhance the opportunity to convert a single-use pine stand to a dual-use silvopasture system," said Williams.

Why does Vice work so hard to conserve the resources on her land? "My parents worked all of their lives to be able to leave me and my brother something and I want it to be the best it can be for them," Vice proudly stated. "It is equally important to me that I leave the land in better condition for future generations, like my son."

Bridgewater enjoys working with a producer as passionate and willing to learn and take action as Vice. Bridgewater emphatically stated "All of Sonja's hard work is not in vain. The land here has come a long way from what it was the first time I visited and I am proud to say that I, along with other technical specialists at NRCS, have played a major role in the improvement." 🐾



Left to right is Leonard "Doc", Wendell, Bryce, Jacob and Ethan Zaunbrecher.



Dawn Morgan, Jimmy Prevost and Jena Bordes

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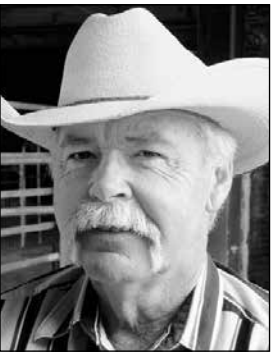


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What to look for when buying a horse



Howard J. Cormier
Southwest Region
Equine Agent
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Someone who purchases a horse for the first time usually begins the process with much excitement and enthusiasm. Sadly, a lack of experience can lead to heartache, disappointment, and even physical injury.

I have witnessed several incidents lately that have ended in very unfortunate results. When it happens to someone you care about and are trying to

help, it leaves a very bad taste in your mouth. When it happens several times in a short time, it makes one much more cautious and distrusting.

Case one involved a lady who had experience riding as a teenager and wanted to get back into riding at 50 years old. She was physically fit, exercised regularly, and was not considered a raw beginner, even though she had not ridden in years. She found an older cutting horse that the owner wanted to loan to someone to get some riding out of. The only

problem with the horse was that it was a “cold-back”, a term for a horse that tends to buck before it is properly warmed up. She rode the horse several times in arenas and on trail rides and got along fine. When she asked the horse to lope one day, the horse broke in two, and bucked her off, injuring her back. She was out of commission for a few months and looked for another horse while she healed.

Case two: She found a well-bred mare that was in training. She specifically requested that the horse needed to lope quietly. The trainer promised to ride with that goal in mind and was paid extra for that effort. After 45 days of riding, the horse was picked up at the designated time, and was ridden slowly in a round pen. All was well, until the horse was asked to trot out a bit more briskly. Without warning, the mare exploded, bucking the rider over her head, and injuring his shoulder. The horse was sent to another trainer for evaluation and bucked with that trainer two days in a row. The trainer recommended that the horse be sold as a broodmare because of her breeding, but not ridden again by someone who was not a bronc rider. If the original trainer was worth her salt as a trainer, she would have informed the new owner that the horse had this problem and prevented a serious injury.

Case three: A lady found a horse that was adver-

tised as a gentle trail riding horse. The lady rode the horse in an arena, and was very happy with its performance, and the deal was struck. She got home, and after two days of light riding, the horse developed a sore back from having high withers and poor saddle fit. Now she must spend more money to find a proper saddle pad to deal with the high withered horse. The question arises: if the original owner knew that the horse had back problems, why did she not inform the new owner to watch for that. Full disclosure might have cost her a sale, but it might have saved the new owner some distress. It just seems that there are too many problems involved in finding a decent riding horse, especially without an expert along to catch some of these problems.

Case four: A child was taking riding lessons from a reputable trainer. She wanted their own horse and found an older horse that was gentle and calm. The family bought the horse, and hauled it home, eager to show it to the riding lesson instructor. The instructor looked inside the horse’s mouth, and found that it had no teeth in the front of its mouth from a history of cribbing. Having paid several thousand dollars, they returned it to the original owner, who, thankfully, refunded their money.

Luckily, there are many stories of horses that were purchased and worked out beautifully. A good



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story involves a 3-year-old gentle horse that walked, trotted, and loped without resistance. It was sold as a kid's horse, and a seven-year-old became its new owner. The only problem it had was that the child had trouble "making it go". It was content to plod along at a slow walk or trot. (An older child got along beautifully with the horse.) This is a very good problem to have, so that the child has a chance to improve their skills and confidence as the horse learns to ride at a faster pace.

Another great story is about another seven-year-old who found the horse of her dreams. She rode regularly, and got along very well with the new partner, improving her skills and confidence as time passed. She is now riding with her family and enjoying her new horse.

A good piece of advice is to go with someone who has experience to look at the horse for sale. Ask questions. Check the teeth. Ask the seller to ride the horse at a walk, trot, lope, and gallop. Does it tie up quietly? Breathing problems? What about trailer loading? Any issues with poor feet? Does it need shoes to be ridden on a hard service? If the horse cannot do what the seller said it should, find another prospect. Do not be in a hurry. If the deal is lost, there are other deals to be found. If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. It might cost more to bring someone along as a "consultant", but it will be cheaper in the long run.


Sadly, there are many ways horse traders can trick beginning owners into thinking that the horse was fine, and they must have done something to cause the problem. A phone camera can be useful to document agreements. Sure, many horses will not handle as they did with the original owner, but that is to be expected. Most inexperienced riders will make the horse confused in its training at the beginning. Discuss what is good and not so good with the horse beforehand. No horse is perfect, and we must all learn to live with some quirks, but issues that result in pain, vet bills, and hospital time are not part of the deal. Ask the seller for references. It is not an unreasonable request. If they balk, maybe there is a reason.

If a trainer is smart, a good idea is to share progress with the owner as the horse is being trained. Regular emails, text messages, and phone calls are appreciated, and establish trust and rapport in the new relationship. Keep in touch with the owner. One good trainer called the

owner and offered to return the horse until extended inclement weather passed by. That's showing that the trainer understood the perspective of the owner, and wouldn't take her money when he could not ride, even though it was not his fault. Not many trainers have covered arenas.

Buyers also need to understand enough about horses to know that trainers are not miracle workers. If the new owners don't ride the horse regularly when they get it home, do not blame the trainer for

a lapse in performance. A "trained" horse is trained only for the current time period, unless it is an older horse with years of experience.

Horses are big investments, and not easily "rehomed" if they do not work out. Consider the consequences, check out references, and do your homework. There are many more good trainers than horse "traders" in the horse world, but one needs to be vigilant to reduce problems and disappointment when buying a horse. 



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Louisiana rice harvest reaching half-way mark

CROWLEY — The harvest for the 2020 rice crop in south Louisiana is nearing the halfway point, and the result is a big improvement over a string of bad to mediocre years.

“If these yields hold out, I believe it would tie the second-highest-yielding year, and it still has the potential to be a record if the high yields hold out,” said LSU AgCenter rice specialist Dustin Harrell. “Regardless if the current crop does not reach the record, it will definitely rank up there with one of our highest-yielding years.”

The record year for growing rice in Louisiana was in 2016 with an average of 7,300 pounds an acre, which equals 45 barrels or 162 bushels. Harrell estimates the current crop at 7,250 pounds — 44.7 barrels or 161 bushels — so far. That compares to 6,300 pounds — 39 barrels or 140 bushels — last year.

Varieties are yielding in the mid- to upper 40 barrels (or more than 144 bushels) an acre with some hitting 50 barrels (180 bushels), he said. Hybrids are reaching the upper 50- to low 60-barrel (216-bushel) range.

Unlike last year, when the crop was hurt by extreme weather, growing conditions were ideal this year. “Conditions were almost perfect for growing rice,” Harrell said.

Occasional rain interfered with the start of the harvest, but drier weather has allowed farmers to get into the fields.

Don Groth, resident coordinator of the AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station, said this year’s weather has been much more favorable for growing a crop. “The environmental conditions are totally different than last year,” he said.

The disease incidence is also much lower. “We’re not seeing fall and kernel smuts that we saw last year,” he said.

Smuts are starting to show up on later-planted rice. “But nothing compared to what we had last year,” he said.

Groth, a plant pathologist, said sheath blight and blast disease pressure has also been light this year.

That has helped boost yields. A field of the variety CL153 at the Rice Research Station yielded 59 barrels or 212 bushels per acre. A nearby farmer who had a bad sheath blight problem on a field of CL153 still yielded 54 barrels an acre, Groth said.



Two combines harvest rice on the R&Z Farms between Eunice and Crowley, Louisiana. The 2020 harvest is resulting in a better crop than previous years. Photo by Bruce Schultz/LSU AgCenter

Jeremy Hebert, AgCenter agent in Acadia Parish, said the harvest is in full swing in his area. “There’s a lot of rice that’s ready to come out now,” he said.

The 2020 crop is a big improvement from 2019. “It’s a big contrast from last year. Things actually worked out in farmers’ favor,” he said.

Unlike last year, the bad disease problems such as smuts that hurt the 2019 crop have not been a major factor this year. “They haven’t even seen it in fields adjacent that had smut real bad last year,” Hebert said.

Jimmy Meaux, AgCenter agent in Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis parishes, said the harvest in Calcasieu is close to half finished, and Jefferson Davis is 35% to 40% complete.

Afternoon showers have been less frequent in the past few days, allowing farmers to make good progress. Yields in Calcasieu Parish are in the mid-40 barrels, and Jefferson Davis yields are mirroring Acadia Parish.

“The crop looks better than last year so far,” Meaux said. “Not a lot of disease.”

In Vermilion Parish, AgCenter agent Andrew Granger said 75% of the crop is harvested. Yields are good but not great, with most varieties producing more than 40 barrels an acre and hybrids exceeding 50 barrels an acre.

The crop there was affected by excessive rainfall late in the season and high nighttime temperatures, Granger said.

Conditions are good for the 30% to 35% of the parish’s acreage that will be used to grow a second crop. The remaining acreage will be used for crawfish.

Farmers are also benefitting from a price increase over last year. “Even a dollar a barrel

more makes a huge difference,” Granger said.

Todd Fontenot, AgCenter agent in Evangeline Parish, said a little more than a third of the acreage has been harvested there. “Just about everybody is in the fields now,” he said.

Yields are in the mid- to upper 40 barrels with hybrids in the mid-50 barrels.


Field conditions are causing combines and tractors to rut fields badly. “Things are pretty wet,” Fontenot said.

Evangeline Parish’s second-crop acreage will decrease because more crawfish is being produced.

In north Louisiana, AgCenter agent Keith Collins in Richland Parish

said some early-planted fields have been drained, and harvest may begin soon.

“We will begin harvest earlier this year as we had rice planted in early to mid-April in some areas, Collins said. “Much of our rice was planted in May.”

Collins is optimistic for the north Louisiana crop. “I think the crop looks pretty good. I have concerns about rice that pollinated the last two weeks of July as we had frequent rain showers and cloudy days,” he said. 



Rice is moved from a grain cart to a trailer to be hauled to a rice dryer. Photo by Bruce Schultz/LSU AgCenter



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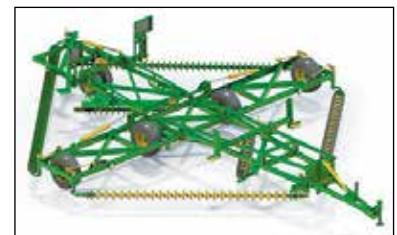
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Hard work learned on the dairy farm guides Tangipahoa Co-op employee to victory

By Neil Melançon

Baton Rouge, La.—When Camry Martin found out she won the 2020 Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture award, she was doing what she normally does.

Martin has worked at the Kentwood Co-op for the last five years and every day involves handling all kinds of requests from farmers and suppliers alike. When she found out she won, she was alone in the office, trying to cover all those bases.

“I was all alone at the co-op and both our managers were out,” Martin said. “I was running around like crazy and all of a sudden my phone starts blowing up!”

Being busy is nothing new to her. Martin grew up on a dairy farm, where she had chores seven days a week.

“Ever since I was little, I knew I wanted to be involved in agriculture,” she said. “I was involved

in my family’s farm, as well as showing cows in 4-H and the FFA. Then in college, I got more involved in ag. I worked at another local co-op before I came here.”

Martin’s passion for agriculture shows. A tough day on her family’s farm inspired her to write a Facebook post that went viral, being shared more than 90,000 times.

“My family had been in dairy since 1953,” Martin said. “That’s all they’ve known. It’s always a struggle, always having to change to survive. Many Americans do not understand the struggle it takes to provide for the country.”

Unfortunately, the dairy in Sunnyhill, La. closed last year. However, Martin said it’s been a blessing in disguise. It’s given her father and grandfather a much-needed retirement and Martin the motivation to help people like her.

“It was a hard day, but it was the best decision,” she said. “One of the main reasons I do what I do is to serve the people who have always served us. Without them, we wouldn’t have a job

or food.”

Martin had only recently found out about Farm Bureau, but is now the chair of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee in Tangipahoa Parish. She’s excited about the award and the prizes, but it’s the people that really have her motivated.

“Hopefully, the national convention will happen and we’ll get to go,” Martin said. “My favorite part is fellowship with others--you meet so many great people. It’s nice to be around others with same goals and lifestyle. The prizes are nice, but what comes with it is even better.”

The YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award competition is designed as an opportunity for young farmers and ranchers to earn recognition while actively contributing and growing through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture. The ideal candidate, or candidates, for the Excellence in Agriculture Award is an individual or couple who does not have the majority of their net income subject to normal agricultural



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For or the winning the Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award, Martin will receive a \$7,500 credit toward the purchase of a 4-wheel ATV, courtesy of Louisiana Land Bank; a \$250 Choice Hotel gift card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation; a \$250 Farm Bureau Bank gift card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance Companies; and a trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in San Diego, California, January 2021, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation.

In San Diego, Martin will represent Louisiana for the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award. The winner on the national level receives a new Ford truck, courtesy of Ford. The first runner up receives a Case IH Farmall 50A Tractor, courtesy of Case IH. The second runner up receives a Case IH 40" Combination roll cabinet and top chest, courtesy of Case IH, along with \$2,200 worth of Stanley Black & Decker merchandise, courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker. The third runner up receives a Case IH 40" Combination roll cabinet and top chest, courtesy of Case IH. Prizes are subject to change.

Founded in 1922, the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 148,000 member families. 🐾

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Cool-season grass and legume forage variety considerations



Ed Twidwell
Extension Specialist
LSU AgCenter

Livestock producers should plan ahead for a winter pasture program that can provide the needed nutrition for their livestock while summer pastures are dormant. If grazing is short, consideration should be given to early planting at least one or more pastures into a prepared seed-bed. Early planting of a small grain, or

a small grain-ryegrass mixture in a lightly cultivated field, can provide a lot of valuable fall and winter grazing if fall weather is suitable for quick stand establishment and good growth. Even if hay harvesting is good in late summer, winter pastures should be a part of most livestock programs. Following are some comments concerning cool-season pasture crops and varieties that should be considered for planting in the fall of 2020.

To be included on the list of varieties that are considered to have performed satisfactorily from

a crop for which several varieties are available, a commercial variety must be tested for three consecutive years and have an average yield not less than 90% of the three-year mean of the top three yielding varieties. A variety will be listed as "Promising" if, following two consecutive years of testing, it has shown acceptable agronomic performance and has yielded at least 90% of the average of the top three varieties. A variety will be dropped from the list if it fails to perform satisfactorily or if it is no longer available to the producers or if not submitted for evaluation.

Ryegrass: Ryegrass is adapted on most soils throughout the state and is the most widely planted cool-season forage crop in Louisiana. It is highly productive in late winter and spring if given good management and weather is suitable. Forage quality is excellent when it is grown either alone or in mixtures with small grains and clovers. Varieties considered to have performed satisfactorily over the past 3 growing seasons and suggested for consideration in 2020 are Bashaw Diploid, Bashaw Tetraploid, Diamond T, Double Diamond, Earlyploid, Flying A, FrostProof, Herdsman, Wax Marshall, Nelson Tetraploid, Passerel Plus, Prine, RM4L, TAMTBO, Triangle T and Winterhawk.

Oats: Oats are excellent producers of

fall growth and have good forage quality. They are the least winter-hardy of the small grains and stand losses are sometimes observed in rough winters. The only variety suggested for consideration is RAM LA 99016.

Rye: Rye is an excellent producer of early fall and winter growth. Its most rapid growth period is in early spring, earlier than ryegrass and other small grains. Varieties suggested for consideration include Oklon, Wintergrazer 70, Maton, Maton II and Elbon.

Wheat: Wheat is a good producer of quality forage in both fall and winter. No commercial wheat varieties have been tested by the LSU AgCenter in recent years. No variety considerations can therefore be made. Producers should consider selecting varieties that are adapted to their local geographical area.

Triticale: Triticale is a genetic cross between wheat and rye. It can be grown for grain or forage. It is more winterhardy than oats, but similar to wheat and rye. The variety FL 08128 is the only variety suggested for planting.

Arrowleaf Clover: Arrowleaf clover is an annual that produces most of its growth in late spring and lasts longer under grazing than small grains and ryegrass. It is best adapted on upland soils and can reseed if allowed to mature a

seed crop. Varieties suggested for consideration are Amclo, Meechi, Yuchi and Apache.

Crimson Clover: Crimson clover is highly productive in early spring but goes out early. Like arrowleaf clover, it is best adapted to upland soils. Varieties suggested for consideration are Dixie, Chief, Tibbee and AU Robin.

Red Clover: Red clover is a high yielder in good stands and persists into the summer if conditions are favorable. In some years it survives through the summer on better soils. It can be used for grazing or hay. Varieties suggested for consideration are Kenland, Kenstar, Cherokee, Southern Belle, AU Red Ace and Barduro.

Subterranean Clover: Subterranean clover is a low-growing annual clover that has prostrate creeping stems with erect leaves. Seeds are produced in a bur that develops at or below the soil surface. It has excellent reseeding ability under close grazing, but some reseeding failures have been reported after the initial stand had thrived for several years. It produces most of its growth in the spring slightly later than crim-



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son clover. All of the suggested varieties originated in Australia. In Australia, the maturity is considered to be early for Wogenellup, midseason for Mt. Barker, and late for Nangeela and Tallarook. Wogenellup contains a low to moderate level of hard seed. The others have a low level of hard seed.

White Clover: White clover is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions and has some tolerance to wet soils once it is established. If growing conditions are favorable, it can persist well into the summer. Varieties suggested for consideration are LA S-1, Osceola, Regalgraze, Pinnacle, Durana, Neches, Renovation, Cresendo and Stamina.

Berseem Clover: Berseem clover is an annual, upright-growing clover. The varieties suggested for consideration in Louisiana are Bigbee and Frosty. Both varieties are noted for excellent fall and

winter growth and a long period of good growth in the spring.


Alfalfa: Alfalfa is an important hay and haylage crop in many states, but the amount produced in Louisiana is very limited. It requires excellent drainage, highly fertile soils, a near neutral pH and a high level of management. Many varieties are marketed, but only a few are adapted in Louisiana. The

only variety suggested for consideration is AmeriGraze 702.

Ball clover: Ball clover is a low-growing winter annual clover. It resembles intermediate white clover. It has excellent reseeding ability. The varieties Grazer's Select and Don are suggested for planting.

Balansa clover: Balansa clover is a clover species that has a growth pattern very similar to that of crim-

son clover. It is slightly more winterhardy than crimson clover, and also produces slightly more forage. It is considered to be a very good re-seeding clover species. The only variety suggested for planting is FIXatioN.

If you have any questions concerning your winter forage program, contact your local Extension agent. 




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La. Farm Bureau Outstanding Young Farm Woman: ‘Somebody needs to feed the world.’

By Neil Melançon and Kristen Oaks-White

Baton Rouge, La.— Working cattle together can be the best form of marriage counseling, if cowboy wisdom holds true.

For Danielle and Brandon Vail, it's definitely hard work—work that often doesn't get recognized. However, this year, Danielle's being recognized for that work as the 2020 Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Outstanding Young Farm Woman.

“It's a bit of a surprise, especially since I've only been in farming for six years, since I married my husband,” Vail said. “It's a humbling experience. I don't know everything, but I'm learning every day.”

While she is certainly humble, Vail's husband, Brandon, is definitely proud—not just of her progress, but as a farmer herself.

“I'm glad she loves it and, I mean, it makes me really proud of her,” Brandon Vail said. “Even the rest of my family, like my dad and my sisters, are really proud of her for how much she has learned, how much she's picked up and how much she does on her own with no one asking her at all.”

Vail may have only recently begun to farm, but she has farm roots. Her father was a farm hand and her godfather was a racehorse stable manager. Vail went to McNeese for a bachelor's degree in equine science, and a master's degree in environmental and chemical engineering.

“I started in vet school and worked at a vet clinic,” she said. “I enjoyed my career as a vet tech, but realized it wasn't for me. So, instead, I married a professional gambler and became one myself.”

Aside from the risk, Vail says there's joy every day on the farm.

“I get away from the city and into wide open skies, the beautiful environment,” Vail said. “You just look out over a rice field or a freshly-clipped pasture and it's beautiful. I can just look at my cows for hours, watching them feed or the calves play.”


There's a point to the Vail's 2,000 acres of rice and cattle that goes beyond work and pleasure, she said.

“Having faith that you know that you were put here for a purpose to do it,” Vail said. “You need to continue to do it, because there's nobody behind you to replace you. We know the struggle that there's just not a whole lot there. Somebody needs to

feed the world.”

The Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Outstanding Young Farm Woman Award recognizes women for outstanding achievement and leadership development. Contestants should derive a majority of their net income from an owned agricultural operation.

As the Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Outstanding Young Farm Woman, Danielle Vail will receive a \$2,000 Farm Bureau Bank Gift Card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company; a trip to the American Farm Bureau FUSION Conference in Portland, Oregon, March 2021, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation; \$500 cash, courtesy of BASF; a \$250 Choice Hotel gift card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation; and a \$250 Farm Bureau Bank Gift Card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance Companies.

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3. Remove junk piles and store raw materials safely.
4. Establish an emergency water supply of at least 2,500 gallons.
5. New hay should be checked frequently for possible heating.
6. Never permit smoking in barns or near any flammable materials.
7. Fuel should never be stored inside a building.
8. Equip farm buildings with smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
9. Make sure that all hay is properly dried before putting it in the barn.
10. Uncovered hay stored outdoors should be formed into tight stacks to resist penetration by rain.



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R&Z Farms: Ludwig's Legacy

Story and photos by Bruce Schultz

MOWATA - This is what it all comes down to for rice farmers. After all the long days of applying chemicals and fertilizer, enduring bad weather, worry, paperwork, mechanical breakdowns and other frustrations, it's time for harvest.

And unlike last year's dismal harvest, reports are good from most farmers.

That's the case for R&Z Farms in northern Acadia Parish.

The 'R' in R&Z Farms is for Keith Rockett and the 'Z' is for Doug and Dwayne Zaunbrecher. Also working on the farm are Keith's son, Jonathan, and Dwayne's sons, Nicholas and Michael.

Their first field cut an impressive 57 barrels an acre on July 31. The 42-acre field was one of five in the LSU AgCenter's Verification Program. It was water-planted on March 13 with RiceTec hybrid FullPage 7321 at a seeding rate of 25 pounds per acre.

"It's amazing how that rice tillers," Jonathan said. "Of the 1,400 acres we have in rice, about 800 acres was planted with hybrids. We especially like it for our weaker ground."

Doug said they have been buying chicken litter from the DeRidder area, and it seems to have boosted rice yields. He said some crawfish producers are convinced it increases their catch too.

They don't second-crop any of their rice, preferring to go from first-crop harvest to crawfish production.

Most of the fields in R&Z Farms are within a 5-mile radius of the original farm where Keith and Jonathan live, although they have one farm north of U.S. Highway 190.

Their biggest weed problem is nutsedge, and it's controlled with Permit or Permit Plus.

Jonathan said the all their seed was treated with Dermacor, so they didn't have much of an insect problem. Disease pressure was light also this year.

It's a totally different year disease-wise compared to 2019, Jonathan said. Last year, smut disease permeated the fields throughout the southern part of the state, but strangely it hasn't been much of a problem this year.

Dwayne said just in case, all their rice is sprayed with fungicides. "Ten years ago, we didn't think that had to be done but one year we learned differently."

The LSU AgCenter has had test plots at the R&Z Farms since the year 2000.

Dr. Steve Linscombe, retired LSU AgCenter

rice breeder, remembers when he first started his off-station research with the Rocketts and Zaunbrechers. "The Rice Breeding Project planted the first off-station research location on R&Z Farms in 2001 so this year makes the 20th consecutive year that research has been conducted there."

Since Linscombe's retirement, Dr. Adam Famoso, LSU AgCenter rice breeder, has continued using the R&Z Farms.

Linscombe said the research location has been extremely beneficial to variety development efforts. "Even though this location is only a few miles from the Rice Research Station, it provides a very different environment for evaluating experimental lines as potential new varieties. The soil type and disease spectrum are different. This makes this location an excellent source of data on yield potential, yield stability, grain quality and disease resistance which is precisely what is needed in making variety release decisions."

Keith said he likes having the plots on the farm. "We think it's good, and I don't feel guilty calling the LSU AgCenter for advice."

Jonathan said he values the LSU AgCenter's expertise with County Agent Jeremy Hebert and Keith Fontenot with the LSU AgCenter Rice Verification Program because he knows the recommendations are not based on selling a product.

As it turns out, Jonathan and Jeremy attended McNeese at the same time, although they didn't know each other then.

Jonathan said he looks forward to Jeremy's consultations. "Half the time we talk about the rice, and half the time we talk about the garden."

Jonathan and his wife, Candace, have a vegetable garden and they get help with sons Jaxson and Jude, ages 10 and 6, and daughter Juliana, age 4. They grow tomatoes, eggplant, squash, bell peppers and cucumbers to make 100 quarts of dill pickles every year.



Ludwig Casselmann taking a rare break.
(Photo provided by Gloria Rockett)



Keith Rockett in the driver's seat of a combine with his father-in-law, Ludwig Casselmann.
(Photo provided by Gloria Rockett)

Jonathan's sister, Hannah, teaches at a small college in Washington near Seattle and a brother, Damian, is an engineer in Houston.

Jonathan's father, Keith, grew up in Rayville on a cotton and soybean farm. He graduated from Louisiana Tech with a degree in animal husbandry, then went to work in the oilpatch with a well testing company. In the late 1970s, he married Gloria Casselmann from Acadia Parish whose father, Ludwig Casselmann, was a rice and cattle farmer.

Keith eventually decided to make a career change and start farming. He relied on his father-in-law to teach him how to grow a rice crop. "I knew nothing about rice, but I couldn't have had a better teacher."

Ludwig, who died in 1990 when Jonathan was 10, made a lasting impression on his grandsons and Keith.

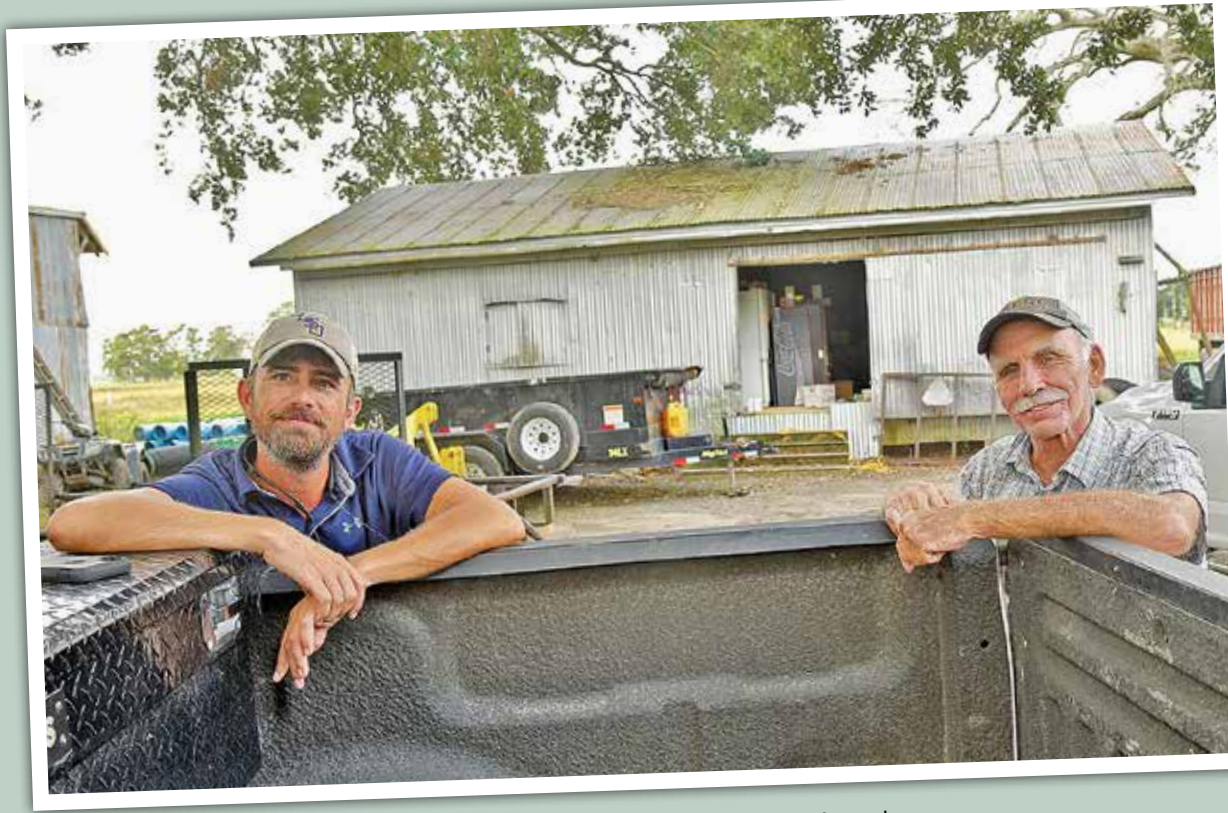
As a boy, Jonathan learned to speak German from his mother. Doug said their grandfather insisted they learn German as soon as they could talk. "He would speak to us in German, and you had to learn it."

And he said his mother, Hannah, also spoke to them in German.

Doug said Ludwig also taught himself to speak French so he could talk with his Cajun neighbors, many of whom could not speak English. "He knew enough to carry on a little conversation."

Dwayne said he went with the family to Germany in the 1990s, and they met some of Ludwig's relatives from the Kassel, Germany, area. "We actually stayed with his cousins. They told me 'I can still hear the Kassel dialect in your German.'"

Dwayne said as a boy, he wasn't sure what he would do for a living. He went to LSU-E for a couple years, but he started working with his



Jonathan Rockett and his father Keith Rockett talk about the upcoming day's work.

grandfather in 1984. In addition to raising rice and cattle, they baled wheat straw to sell for use at racehorse tracks and on highway construction.

Dwayne's sons work the grain bins and help with whatever comes up on the farm. He said he encouraged his oldest son, Michael, to go into engineering but he insisted on becoming a farmer. Michael did earn a master's degree in business administration. Nicholas is nearing graduation from McNeese in ag business.

Dwayne and his wife, June, also have a daughter, Kathryn, who's getting her master's degree in business administration at Louisiana Tech.

Doug started with the farm in 1990. He and his wife, Marla, have a son, Hans, who's a sophomore at Louisiana Tech majoring in construc-

tion management, and a daughter, Anya, a high school junior. Doug's wife is a teacher in Iota.

Doug attended trade school for diesel mechanics, so his abilities are a good fit on the farm. He's in charge of the operation's trucking division.

"Things have really changed a lot," Doug said.

He recalls learning to drive a tractor without a cab, and he distinctly remembers being put to work by their grandfather in a field with Dwayne. "I think it took us all day to plow that 20-acre field with a 10-foot plow and a 12-foot plow."

Doug said Ludwig would save chores for the

SEE R&Z FARMS, PAGE 22

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R&Z FARMS:

FROM PAGE 21

weekend for him and Dwayne, and that included mixing feed, grown on the farm, for the milk cow. “We always had little projects. We definitely give him all the credit for being taught how to work at a young age.”

“I remember pulling red rice when I couldn’t

see over the tops of the rice,” Dwayne said, recalling a memory as a 5-year-old boy. “He would get mad at me because I’d step on his heels because I didn’t want to get lost.”

He said his grandfather’s experience of dealing with the Depression had a lasting influence. “He taught me if I wanted something, I had to go out and get it.”

Dwayne said after Ludwig died, numerous

cans of old nails were thrown away. “When we tore down a barn, we pulled every nail and straightened it because we might need it if we built another barn.”

Doug remembers that too. “He’s 100% right on that. There might still be some old nails in the warehouse if you dig deep enough.”

Dwayne also remembers when someone would bring up the possibility of growing a different crop, his grandfather would tell him, “This is rice and cattle country.”

In those days, it was common to rotate cattle and rice on a field but now, he said, crawfish has replaced cattle.

The pandemic resulted in many crawfish producers losing customers this year when restaurants closed, but Dwayne said R&Z Farms maintained most of their business. They have a buyer who sells to customers on the East and West coasts, he said, and they supply restaurants, including many in north Louisiana from Shreveport to Rayville.

Dwayne said their catch was good, but prices fell early and didn’t rebound.

He said after a month, he realized it was necessary to catch crawfish early in the weekend to be able to meet a heavy weekend demand. “It was crazy this year. We sold more crawfish the week after Easter than the week of Easter.”

This year, their crawfish boats were switched from cleated wheels to cage wheels. A neighbor, Patrick Bellard, fabricated the wheels that resemble squirrel cages, and don’t have the lugged



A combine cuts the last cut of a 42-acre field on R&Z Farms. The field was in the LSU AgCenter Rice Verification Program this year, and it cut 57 barrels an acre.

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cleats that dig into the soil. Instead of the deep ruts, the wheels leave shallower cuts in the field that can be repaired easily. "You still get tracks, but they're not busting through the clay pan," Dwayne explained. "It's much better than it was in previous years."

He said the new wheels lose some traction, but there are ways to compensate for that problem. Dwayne said a neighbor has been using the new wheel design for a couple years, and he notices a big improvement in the field conditions.

County Agent Jeremy Harper said the R&Z Farms' is constantly working to improve. "They're always interested in the latest and greatest, and they're very progressive farmers."

He said he's worked with them on several projects. "They are a great, great family, and great farmers." A



Dwayne Zaunbrecher checks a levee for crawfish burrows. Crawfish are seeded in fields in June for the upcoming season.

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LSU AgCenter County Agent Jeremy Harper gives a rice sample to Keith Fontenot of the LSU AgCenter Rice Verification Program. The sample was taken to measure the moisture level of the freshly harvested rice.

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Four inducted into Louisiana Ag Hall of Distinction

BATON ROUGE – Four icons of agriculture were inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction during a ceremony Aug. 6 at the L'Auberge Hotel in Baton Rouge.

The four individuals are James Barnett, a forestry researcher from Pineville; John Denison, a rice, crawfish and cattle farmer from Iowa; Jay Hardwick, a row crop farmer from Newellton; and Calvin Viator, an agricultural crop consultant from Thibodaux.

Barnett was raised in the Ouachita mountains of Arkansas and spent nearly five decades with the U.S. Forest Service. He spent summers in Idaho planting trees to finance his college education, and after graduating, he enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard and spent more than 20 years in the Coast Guard Reserve.

One of his first duties with the Forest Service focused on increasing the survivability of seedlings used to replenish areas that had been cut.

“Alexandria has a reforestation program in research,” Barnett said. “My assigned task when I came to work: figure out how to produce seed, overcome dormancy and how to grow millions of seedlings from the seed we had available.”

Forestry is Louisiana’s largest agricultural commodity. Barnett understood the importance of maintaining a healthy forest industry because of the many benefits.

“They contribute a great deal to the economy of the state and the whole South,” he said. “So, forests are a big part of our environment, and to me, there’s just something aesthetic about it. You drive down the road, you’re going through a forest, you feel good about it.”

Denison, a third-generation farmer, has played key roles in the Louisiana Rice Research Board and Louisiana Farm Bureau and served more than 30 years on the Calcasieu Parish School Board. His career in farming fulfilled a life-long dream.

“From the time I was old enough to get on a tractor, I fell in love with the farming operation,” Denison said. He enjoyed “everything that was on the farm, from working cattle and driving tractors in the field or helping prepare fields for rice growing.”

Because of the ups and downs associated with commodity prices, Denison developed a detailed recordkeeping system that prepared him for the good times and the bad.

“Farming has always been a challenge,” he said. “It’s always been ups and downs. Many times, the prices did not equal what our production costs were. I had to be very studious in recordkeeping and knowing where the dollars needed to be put to serve me best.”

Hardwick began his career teaching art at the university level. A fortuitous set of circumstances found him on the family farm of his wife Mary in Tensas Parish. It was here the allure of farming engulfed him.

“In an academic setting where I came from, control is everything,” Hardwick said. “You have an air-conditioned environment. Mother Nature is completely unpredictable. But that’s part of the seductive quality of farming that I completely enjoy to this day.”

Hardwick is not from the South, and he didn’t start out with farming in his roots. With his induction, he considers it being accepted into the Louisiana farming community.

“I wasn’t born in Louisiana,” he said. “I feel like this is my citizenship. This recognition has made me feel very much a part of Louisiana in a way that I haven’t been full before. I am part of the Louisiana family.”

Viator has had two successful careers. His first one involved teaching agricultural classes at Nicholls State University for 30 years. During this time, he launched his second career that he continues to perform today: an agricultural consulting business in the heart of Louisiana’s sugarcane belt.

“I was fortunate that circumstances allowed me to do both,” Viator said. “While at Nicholls, I only signed a nine-month contract, so I was free during the critical months for doing consulting.”

Viator’s consulting work requires knowledge in various disciplines,

including entomology, plant pathology and soil fertility. It also takes a degree of human psychology working with diverse clientele.

“The biggest challenge in ag consulting is — I tell young people, you’ve got to find out what connects with your clients,” he said. It’s not always the same. We’re proud of the fact that many of our clientele are on the third generation.”

Since its creation seven years ago, 22 people have been enshrined into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction. The hall is a collaborative effort between the LSU AgCenter, the Louisiana Radio Network, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. It recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to agriculture and agriculture-related industries in Louisiana.



Dr. James Barnett

James Barnett, of Pineville, was inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction. Barnett had a 50-year career with the U.S. Forest Service with a focus on the survivability of seedlings used in reforesting areas that had been harvested. Barnett authored more than 300 publications and is a leading historian of the forest industry in the South. Photo courtesy of Louisiana Radio Network

SEE DISTINCTION, PAGE 26

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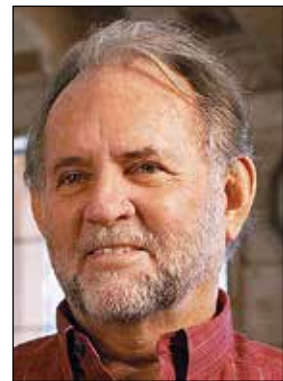
DISTINCTION: Four Inducted

FROM PAGE 25



John Denison, of Iowa, Louisiana, was one of four people inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction. He is a third-generation farmer raising rice, soybeans, cattle and crawfish. Denison played a leading role in the development of the Louisiana Rice Research Board, held leadership positions with the Louisiana Farm Bureau and was on the Calcasieu Parish School Board for more than 30 years. Photo courtesy of Louisiana Radio Network

John Denison



Jay Hardwick was inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction on Thursday, Aug. 6. Hardwick farms Somerset Plantation, which is located in Tensas Parish near Newellton. Hardwick started out teaching art at the university level, but circumstances led him to the family farm of his wife Mary, and he quickly became enthralled with farming. LSU AgCenter photo

Jay Hardwick



Calvin Viator

Calvin Viator, of Thibodaux, was inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction during a ceremony held at the L'Auberge Hotel in Baton Rouge. Viator started a successful agricultural consulting business while teaching agriculture classes at Nicholls State University. He is still involved with his consulting business, which is in the heart of sugarcane country. LSU AgCenter photo

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Don't let 'caution fatigue' prevent good decisions



I recently ran across an article by Fedor Kossafovski, a science writer, that talks about a term coined by a Northwestern University School of Medicine clinical psychologist that is pertinent to our present time: "caution fatigue." This is where we relax precautions and have difficulty moderating exposure to a really aversive situation

Charlie Stutesman
Marketing Consultant

— essentially ignoring the risk around us. The article went on to say we are basically tired, with mental or physical fatigue having to deal with the stress all around us tied to the pandemic. Our brains adjust because it helps to reduce stress and so we take longer to respond and start to ignore warnings. We just "don't want to deal with it."

Today I had the opportunity to be on a potato farm, a rather large one, where harvest had started early. Potatoes were growing rapidly, quicker than normal. Yields were off a little, but it was for an unusual reason: the early harvest was prompted not by agromonic considerations, but because these potatoes are for chips and are going to one of the major brands. The harvest started early because with people staying home more, the demand for potato chips has risen. (As I sit here with a bag

on my desk.) Starting harvest early simply means some of the potatoes are not the ideal size yet and could use the extra week, but that won't be the case. Regardless, yields are still running 95-97%, even starting early. They expect to improve in the next week to 100% or better.

I am hearing the same comments from seed corn growers. Harvest will likely start early and yields look really good. And as one can expect, seed corn is a pretty good indicator of what our field corn crop will look like. Usually quite a few parallels can be drawn. Did I mention the seed corn crop looks good? Even Michigan sweet corn this year is really good. It seems a little sweeter this year.

Back to the coronavirus, what did we, as humans, do when the outbreak started? Most stayed inside, washed hands, did not go out to eat, didn't even touch groceries and tried to act responsibly. Personally, I have had some friends who caught the virus. Some were hospitalized and almost died, and one who did. Even so, I find myself not staying six feet away at times, and have even shaken hands (although I did use sanitizer shortly afterwards). Even being in a high-risk group, I wear a mask most, but not all, of the time.

I'm not alone in this behavior. As cases surge, the research says we tend to relax our precautionary stance. "We are always more rightened when the risk is new" noted David Ropeik, Harvard University author and consultant who teaches risk communication, who went on to say the new fear rising up and countering the fear of the disease is the fear or lack

of control over our lives and future. That certainly seems to explain a lot of the behaviors and comments in the news. Baruch Fischhoff, psychologist at Carnegie Mellon University characterizes this as we are now bestowing upon ourselves the honorary degree of our very own "intuitive epidemiologists."

Ropeik went on to say we tend to first react to any input with emotion first, reason second, processed by the amygdala, which deals with emotion before going to the prefrontal cortex, where higher order thinking and decision making is done.

The point is, potatoes look good, seed corn looks good, sweet corn IS good and we are tired of trying to will prices higher. And after a prolonged period of lackluster prices, many of us just "don't want to deal with" the prospect of even lower prices. If you haven't sold much and have been avoiding uncomfortable decisions, it may be time for the prefrontal cortex to take over, and make sure we stay clear of "caution fatigue."

Ropeik's article recommends developing a "cornerstone" habit to manage risk. Don't overload on information, as that puts us in a fight or flight mode, and deliver clear messages. As for the pandemic, that last goal has been lost. But for our crop, this year looks a lot like 2014 in terms of the ratings, and we may see a repeat of that year when the national yield was a record high and up sharply from the year before. Don't ignore the threat of lower prices. Stay focused.

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2020 variety performance sets stage for planting next season

By Scott McClure

With rice harvest in full swing in many areas and the crop making rapid progress in others, reports are coming in regarding the strong performance of several new Horizon Ag Clearfield varieties like CLL17, as well as the effectiveness of the Provisia Rice System and variety PVL02 in controlling grass and weedy rice.

Louisiana farmers are already starting to call to book seed for 2021, according to Dr. Tim Walker, Horizon Ag general manager, adding that new Clearfield varieties for 2021, CLL17 and CLL16, are both garnering attention due to their potential for significantly higher yields and outstanding grain quality. They join CLL15 and CLM04, two Clearfield varieties that were first available in 2020, as leading Clearfield contenders for planting next season.

In addition, PVL02, the latest Provisia rice variety, is proving its value in Louisiana in 2020, providing higher yield potential and milling quality than PVL01, while enabling farmers to effectively control red rice, weedy rice and ALS-resistant grasses that have been hindering profitability.

“The Provisia Rice System is being used more and more in a rotational system with Clearfield varieties and soybeans to bring these problem fields back into production,” said Dr. Walker. “It’s an effective technology that, when correctly stewarded, is proving to be a valuable tool; and PVL02 is showing to be a steady performer in the system.”

Farmers looking ahead to the 2021 season can expect the following from Horizon Ag:



Horizon Ag variety CLL17 will be available in 2021 and has shown strong yield potential and very good grain quality.

NEW: CLL17: An early-season, semi-dwarf, long grain Clearfield rice from the breeding program of Dr. Adam Famoso at the LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station. Over years of testing, CLL17 has shown strong yield potential, excellent milling yield and very good grain quality. It also has the blast-resistant gene that can be critical in Louisiana rice production. Dr. Famoso, speaking at the recent online field day in Crowley, Louisiana, said CLL17 had yield potential 5% to 8% higher than CL153, one of the most popular planted varieties in recent years in Louisiana.

“CLL17 will replace CL153 as the variety of choice in Louisiana and other areas because of its superior yield potential and consistency,” said Dr. Walker. “For that reason, we’re planning to have a good supply of seed ready to meet what we expect to be a high demand.”

NEW: CLL16: A high-performing, long grain Clearfield variety developed by the University of Arkansas, CLL16 has shown excellent rough rice yields and industry-leading blast tolerance. Dr. Walker noted that the new variety has “a milled product that continues to bring back the Gold Standard rice the Southern USA has historically produced. Based on its performance and potential, we expect CLL16 to be a great addition to our Clearfield variety lineup and get a lot of interest.”

PVL02: PVL02 was available in limited supplies for planting this season and proved again it represents a step-up in yield potential, agronomic characteristics and tolerance to Provisia herbicide compared to PVL01. PVL02 is also about seven days earlier, which bodes well for southern Louisiana when it comes to a ratoon crop. It has clarity and low chalk comparable to PVL01 and improved milling yields. Another advantage is that PVL02 is not quite as susceptible to blast.

“We saw a significant jump in demand for Provisia rice varieties this year, and particularly for PVL02,” said Dr. Walker. “Across the region, farmers are saying Provisia fields are their cleanest fields. PVL02 will be in good supply and will get strong consideration on a lot of acreage in 2021.”

CLL15: One of Horizon Ag’s most popular varieties in 2020, CLL15 is an

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“In 2020, CLL15 has continued to stand out, with farmers telling us they are expecting big things at harvest based on how it has looked all year,” said Dr. Walker. “That’s really no surprise because it was a strong performer in tests before its commercial release, challenging hybrid yield potential without the hybrid seed cost. It’s won a place on many farms throughout the region.”

CLM04: Developed at the Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center, medium grain CLM04 was first planted commercially in 2020 and has shown tremendous yield potential and stability. It has improved blast tolerance compared to Jupiter and milled grain characteristics similar to those found in Jupiter and Titan.

“For farmers considering planting a medium grain rice, CLM04 combines the benefits of a Clearfield variety with the quality and performance potential needed to consistently maximize ROI,” said Dr. Walker.

CL151: Since its release, this early, semi-dwarf rice has been planted on more acreage than any other Clearfield variety or hybrid. Until the launch of the newest Clearfield varieties, it had the highest yield potential of any pure-line variety.

CL111: A very early, semi-dwarf variety extremely popular in Louisiana due to its excellent first-and second-crop yield potential. It produces a highly marketable grain accepted both domestically and internationally.

CL163: The first Clearfield variety that has the “Dixiebelle” cook type that is preferred for rice processing. CL163 has received favorable reviews for key export countries in the Western Hemisphere. “CL163, because of identity-preserved price premiums, may be one of the most profitable rice varieties we have offered in recent years,” said Dr. Walker.

CLJ01: The first Clearfield aromatic “Jasmine” type rice variety will continue to offer farmers the convenience and effectiveness of the Clearfield technology, with excellent grain quality and yield potential better than most Jasmine-type varieties. 🍌



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East Carroll Parish farmer wins Louisiana Farm Bureau's Top Young Farmer Award

By Neil Melançon and Kristen Oaks-White

BATON ROUGE - The 2020 Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winner is Phillip Tomlinson of East Carroll Parish. This is the top award presented annually to a Louisiana farmer or rancher 35 or younger who's main income is from production agriculture and shows innovation and financial stability on their operation.

Phillip, along with his wife Carey and their four children, operate a 2,700-acre grain and livestock farm near Lake Providence, La. He said the award is an incredible honor, but it's one part of the joy of being a farmer.

"I have to say that I'm living my dream on this farm," Phillip said.

Established in 1950, Tomlinson Farms is now in its fourth generation. The fifth generation, Phillip's son Weston, already goes into the field to pick ripe sweet corn.



The 2020 Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winner is Phillip Tomlinson of East Carroll Parish.

"The joy of it, to me, is having my kids out there in the sweet corn patch because they are learning how to work hard, how to sweat, how to pick the big ears," He said. "They take them and deliver them to friends and family. They're actu-

ally getting to see that we are really doing our part to feed the world and our part to give to others."

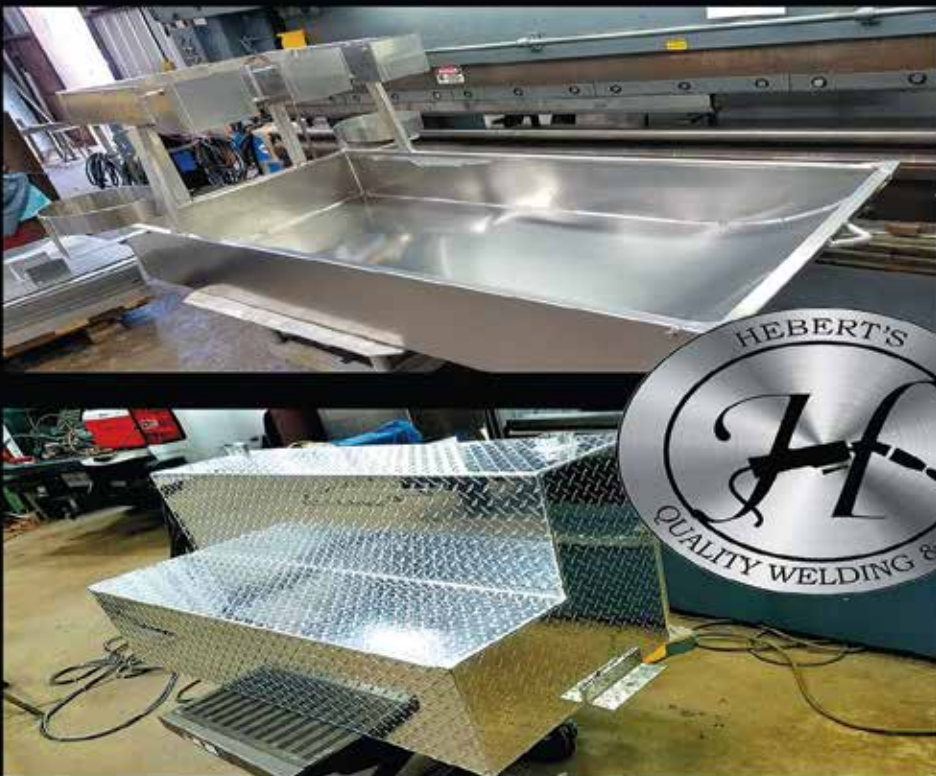
In their effort to feed the world, the Tomlinson children sell eggs from the family's laying hens. Phillip said that teaches them that farm life requires management of money and resources.

"They all get the money if they work," he said. "We divide the money up and 10% goes to their tithes, 10% goes to savings and they can do whatever they want with the rest. That's been really fun to see their minds start working and start realizing how things work, you know, how the money works."

Managing money is important if they want to see another generation on their land. It's meant a lot of sacrifice and change since the farm

began.

"I saw the need to change some things if we're going to remain profitable going into the future," Tomlinson said. "So, we moved to row-fall irriga-



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tion. We've leveled almost 900 acres and we leveled a lot of ground that was not previously leveled and we put it on a fall to where now we can grow rice, corn and soybeans. In farming, it's all about getting water on your crop, but getting it off is just as important or more important. The row fall irrigation is a lot more efficient. We use a lot less water. We get it on faster. We get it off faster, so our yields have really gone up."

It's all an effort to take this fourth-generation farm to the fifth and beyond. While Phillip says he doesn't want to pressure any of his children to take the reins, he does want this land ready if they do.

"My dream would be for at least one of my kids to come back to the farm," he said. "It wouldn't matter if it's my son, Weston, or any of my girls. If anybody wants to join this operation, they have got an open door and we will make it work."

For winning the Louisiana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award, Phillip receives \$35,000 cash from the Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company, a \$250 Choice Hotel gift card, courtesy of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, a \$250 Farm Bureau Bank Card, courtesy of Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance Companies and a paid trip to the 2021 American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in San Diego, Calif.

In San Diego, Phillip will represent Louisiana for the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award. The winner on the national level receives a new Ford truck, courtesy of Ford. The first runner up receives a Case IH Farmall 50A Tractor, courtesy of Case IH. The second runner up receives a Case IH 40" Combination roll cabinet and top chest, courtesy of Case IH, along with \$2,200 worth of Stanley Black & Decker merchandise, courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker. The third runner up receives a Case IH 40" Combination roll cabinet and top chest, courtesy of Case IH. Prizes are subject to change.

Founded in 1922, the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 148,000 member families. 🌱



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If we want to count, we must be counted



Dr. Mike Strain
*Commissioner of
Agriculture and
Forestry*

If we want to count, we must be counted. I'm encouraging everyone to fill out the 2020 federal census.

Every ten years, a complete and accurate count of every resident is required by the constitution of the United States.

The census will collect basic information about the people living in your household. When completing the census, you should

count everyone who is living in your household on April 1, 2020.

Here is why it is important to all of us:

Responding to the census is not only your civic duty; it also affects the amount of funding your community receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government.

Specifically, the census data is used to plan new homes and businesses, improve neighborhoods, and to distribute federal funding to local com-

munities ensuring public services and funding for such things as roads, schools, hospitals, and fire departments. The census is also used to determine electoral representation that includes the number of seats each state is allocated in the United States House of Representatives, all of which are critical to Louisiana and its residents. Further, the census data drives local and state reapportionment, determining the boundary lines for everything from village and town council districts, to city, parish, and state legislative districts.

More than three hundred federal programs rely on data derived from the census to guide the distribution of funds to states, parishes, municipalities, and households.

It is estimated that every person who is not counted will cost Louisiana approximately three thousand, two hundred dollars or more in lost federal funds.


Due to the Covid-19 public health emergency, the United States Bureau of the Census has delayed the start of its follow-up until August 11, 2020.

For agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and rural economic development, the stakes could not be higher. The Federal Census combined with the data obtained by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is used to determine our

fair share of programmatic funding from USDA and other federal agencies. This statistical information is also used by policy makers such as myself in the administrative branch of government to make decisions and understand the changes and shifts in population and its effect on production and marketing.

Your information is confidential. Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI, or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives.

The Census Bureau has a robust cybersecurity program that incorporates industry best practices and federal security standards for encrypting data.

Again, I urge you to fill out the 2020 federal census when you receive it. It counts to be counted. 



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Sawmill owner accused of timber theft

BATON ROUGE – Following a six month investigation, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) enforcement agents arrested 67-year-old Robert B. Barnes of Hamburg, Ark. for theft of timber valued at \$752,394.72.

Barnes owned and operated a Lincoln Parish sawmill company in Simsboro, La. called Barnes in Barnes Tie LLC. In February, agents received complaints from multiple loggers who delivered timber to the sawmill owned by Barnes. The loggers told agents they had not received payment for the delivered timber.

As a result of the investigation, LDAF agents discovered Barnes misappropriated more than \$752,000 in proceeds from customers.

“Timber is a major industry in the state of Louisiana and it is also a long-term investment for landowners. We take the crime of timber theft very seriously and work hard to bring these criminals to justice,” said Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M.

On July 29, 2020, LDAF agents arrested Barnes and booked him into the Lincoln Parish Detention Center. Bond was set at \$100,000 and Barnes has reportedly bonded out.

If convicted, Barnes faces a fine of up to \$10,000 and/or prison time up to 10 years.

To report suspected timber theft, contact the LDAF Office of Forestry at 225-925-4500 to file a complaint.



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Crawfish and second crop rice



Mark Shirley
Crawfish Specialist
LSU AgCenter

Should I harvest the second crop rice or leave it for the crawfish? That question has been debated for years. And the debate will continue because there are so many variables to consider.

Last year on the south farm of the LSU AgCenter's Rice Research Station, we planted rice in two, side by side, seven-acre fields. These were fields that were dry the previous season, so they were essentially first year ponds just like farmers do when they rotate fields for rice one year and crawfish the next. The fields were managed identically with the exception that one side was harvested in the fall for a second crop. We found some interesting results.

The two fields were planted with Pirogue variety rice because that was what was avail-

able in storage at the station. The fields were planted on March 18, 2019 and then stocked with crawfish in late May with 60 pounds per acre. Due to rain delays in August, the first rice harvest was completed on September 5, 2019. Both fields were flushed the day after harvesting and a shallow flood was maintained once the stubble was a few inches tall. In October, the water level was raised to 8-10 inches. Dissolved oxygen was monitored using some recorders that checked the oxygen every hour.

Weather delays caused the second harvest to occur on November 19, 2019. Instead of drying the field to harvest, the water level was lowered to 2-4 inches a few days before harvesting. Once the second crop was harvested, the water level was raised again to 8-10 inches. Both ponds were flushed with aerated well water when oxygen levels were low. Even with pumping, there were still times when the dissolved oxygen dipped below 1 ppm in both ponds.

Here were the results. The pond where the second crop was harvested caught 43 pounds less crawfish per acre and ended up with \$92 less per acre.



The single crop pond caught slightly more pounds of crawfish and caught more earlier when the price was higher. That explains the difference in value per acre. (Figures 1 and 2)

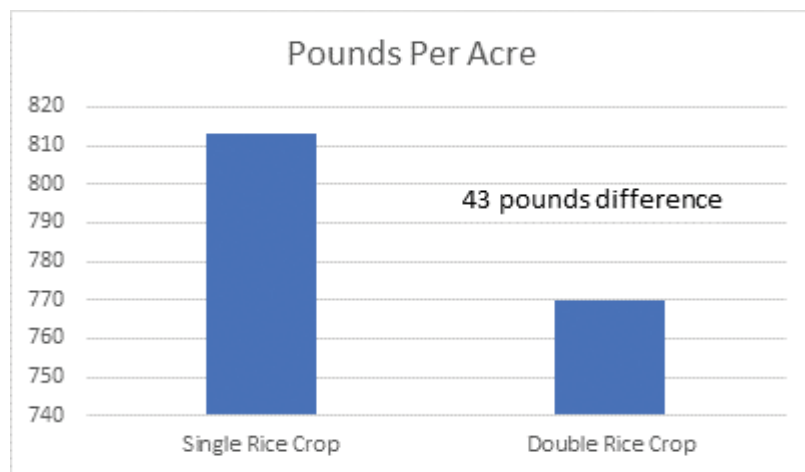


Figure 1. Pounds of crawfish harvested per acre from the demonstration crawfish ponds at the LSU AgCenter's Rice Research Station during the 2019-2020 crawfish season.

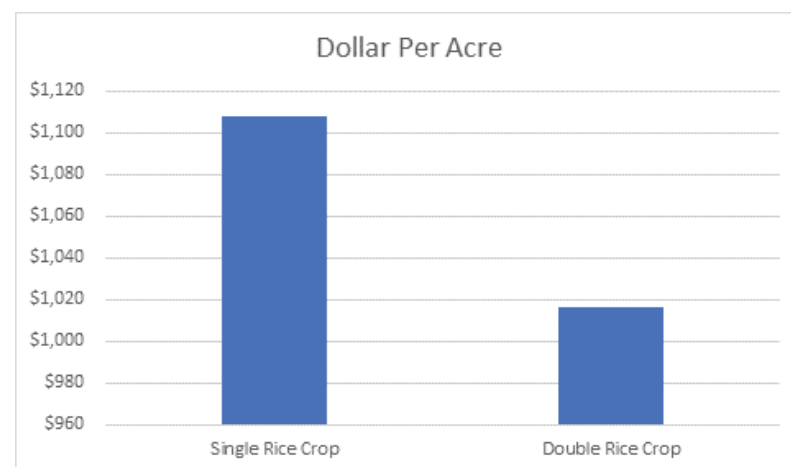


Figure 2. Value of the crawfish harvested per acre from the demonstration crawfish ponds at the LSU AgCenter's Rice Research Station during the 2019-2020 crawfish season.

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One thing that we were unable to measure was the amount of rice harvested from the second crop pond. Weather problems after planting resulted in a poor stand development. More weather problems delayed both the first and second harvests of rice. Yields for both crops were judged to be less than what most farmers would harvest from their well-managed rice fields.

The potential value of that second crop is the center of the debate that was mentioned at the start of this article. Looking back at the crawfish harvest this past season, to come out ahead in total revenue, the second rice harvest would have had to make more than \$92 per acre. To offset the lower and later crawfish production, the additional pumping to maintain water quality, and to cover the cost of growing and harvesting the second crop, the second crop would have to yield about 10 barrels per acre.

There are some other factors to take into consideration. The ponds were harvested 95 days (66 baited runs and 29 walk-in harvest) from December through June. If the Covid-19 pandemic had not affected the market, we could have harvested more crawfish and the difference in pounds and revenue might have been greater.



Second crop rice harvet.

Another factor that helped the ponds at the rice station was the spring growth of vegetation (rice regrowth, pickerel weed and bull tongue). While many crawfish ponds ran out of food in April and May, our ponds had food, cover, and good water quality. We did not have a problem with small, peeler crawfish. All our crawfish were sold as field grade throughout the season.

While the results of this past year provide food for thought, it was just a single year of data. Weather caused problems with the rice harvests in the ponds and the pandemic affected the market. For these reasons and to see if

the trend holds up, we are repeating the trial again in the coming year.

In March, two ponds were planted with rice. The ponds are both seven acres in size and separated by a middle levee. The ponds were stocked with 60 pounds of crawfish per acre at the end of May with our own crawfish. The first harvest of rice will take place in mid-August and one of the ponds will be harvested again in late October.

By the end of next crawfish season, we will again report the results and have more debate on whether its better to leave or harvest that second crop of rice. ^A



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Beef Brunch Educational Series



Ashley K. Edwards, PhD
Assistant Extension
Agent and Coordinator
Animal Sciences
LSU AgCenter

The Beef Brunch Educational Series has been developed by LSU AgCenter Livestock Specialists and Agents to reach producers, consultants, landowners, research, extension, and other industry members. Growing support of the series has prompted the continuation and expansion of the series and its content. Beef Brunch includes both monthly webinars and bi-weekly news updates that bring pertinent information to producers and related industry personnel. These events allow the LSU AgCenter to present research-based information, management guidelines, educational opportunities, and industry news to clientele throughout the state.

Monthly webinars are hosted on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. as live events through Microsoft Teams, allowing producers the opportunity to engage with the presenters. These webinar sessions are also recorded and shared through the various media platforms listed below. Likewise, the bi-weekly news updates are released every other Monday at 10:30 a.m. on the following platforms. The news updates feature weather and pasture conditions, a market outlook, management tips, events, and current topics in the beef industry.

All past webinars and news updates can be found on the Beef Brunch website and YouTube channel. For more information regarding the Beef Brunch Educational Series, contact Ashley Edwards at akedwards@agcenter.lsu.edu.



Website: <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/beefbrunch>

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Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/4KairYeSwuxxwLfVIX5Nr>

Anchor Podcast: <https://anchor.fm/beefbrunch>

Google Podcast: Coming Soon

Apple Podcast: Coming Soon 🎧



Dave Foster
CEO
Cattle Producers of La.

Harvest time

Louisiana farmers and ranchers are busy with harvest. This time of year, all the planning and research comes down to one variable- Ma Nature! Will the weather cooperate and who wants rain or sunshine? We are fortunate in Louisiana because we are ahead of others when it come to harvest time. The rice and row crop farmers will have the bulk of their crop harvested and in the bins before the major production areas get started.

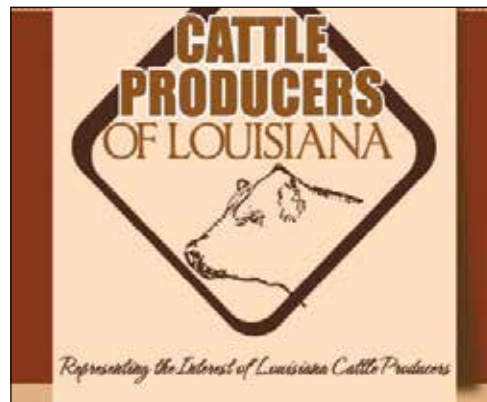
Our cattle producers have found out (through experience) that if they market their Spring-born calves from mid-August to mid-

October they beat their northern cattlemen who market their calves in November and December. This fact coupled with the advantage to grow forages year-round allows us in the Southeast to adjust our marketing decisions.

Speaking of marketing decisions, with the Covid-19 “event” turning everything upside down, we are lucky to have some alternatives. We can move our calf crop early or hold on to them as the market dictates. Keeping current with the market is critical this year. The feedlots have a real challenge (as of mid-July) working through a backlog of about a million head of market-ready cattle. The packers, under normal conditions,

can get through this “wall of ready cattle” by ramping up chain speed and harvesting on Saturdays, however the Covid-19 has reduced their work-force and added other restrictions so slaughter numbers are still lagging behind.

Cattle in the feedlots that are normally marketed at live weights of 1350 lbs. are coming out weighing 1550 lbs. or more. Carcass weights are 42 lbs. heavier than the same time last year. These facts equate to more beef available which has dropped the Choice Box Beef Cutout price from a record high of \$478.00 cwt. on May 12, 2020 to \$200.00 cwt. on July 17, 2020. Cattle coming out of the feedlots since April are still losing \$250.00-\$300.00 per head.



For us in the cow/calf states, we have seen our calf prices moving higher and yearlings coming off a stocker program have really enjoyed higher prices in mid-July. So be aware of the current market and consult your marketing agent if you have not sold your calves yet.

Enjoy the harvest and may the fruits of your labor be positive. For more information contact Cattle Producers of Louisiana at lacattle.org or 888-528-6999. 🎧



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David and Goliath of television

“The farmer has always been a peasant.” – Richard Blinco, Idaho

When the market crashed in 1975, Richard had a ranch, feedlot, dairy, potatoes, alfalfa and a packing house.

Here we sit 45 years later and not much has changed. Today less than 1.3% of the American population, (and 7% in Canada), is involved in production agriculture. We, who are left with the responsibility of feeding the ever-growing population that now stands at 331 million people. We do it. It is lots of work. We have an enormous amount of scientific, technical, medical, and mechanical research and dedication looking over our shoulder as we break the ground, plant the wheat, brand the calf or drive the truck.

Imagine a ‘Nóngmín’ bent over in a rice field a thousand years before Christ came, not much different than a farmer bent over a furrow, feeling the soil today. What is our motive...inspiration? Do we say, “We’re feeding the world”? “I’ll get famous!” “The big money”?

No. It is as simple as “It’s what I do.”

There are people who have a deep heart, have a conscience, are dedicated to those we work for, are close to God, maybe have guilt, or just kindness and care. They don’t think ‘money first’. Occasionally, the consumer has a chance to make farmers’ lives easier, nicer, more satisfying.

Let me suggest...their own television channels. Television waves are controlled by a handful of global companies. They have brought wonderful communication worldwide with hundreds of channels. 99.9% are dedicated to the majority polled, which are suburban folks.

The ag rural television, which is not ‘about us’ but ‘for us’, are limited to pillars like US FARM REPORT and Orion Samuelson and some local weeklies that are an hour long.

RFDTV Channel is the only exception; RFDTV contents are exclusively rural and agriculture, 24 hours a day. They are leading the effort to have Congress vote on HR 2682 that would ensure at least one percent, 0.1...1%, is devoted exclusively to the ag rural market.

Like ag publications and ag radio, ag television is part of what holds all of our ag community together. To those of us in ag media, it’s not just a job. I think it has something to do with our souls.

If you want to help, contact your Representative or Senator about passing HR 2682.

HR 2682:
Agricultural News and Rural Content Act of 2020
This bill requires certain video programming distributors, such as cable providers, to use at least 1% of their channel capacity to transmit channels of programming that serve the needs and interests of rural areas. (A)



AGTIVITIES

August

20 LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Field Day – The 2020 Sweet Potato Field Day will be held at the Sweet Potato Station in Chase, LA. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. followed by field tours at 9:00 a.m. A sponsored lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Dr. Tara Smith at 318-557-9501 or Mr. Myrl Sistrunk at 318-267-6712.

September

11 Advanced Master Cattleman Program – Program will be held at the DeWitt Livestock Show Facility, located at 100 Gregg Marshall Drive in Alexandria, LA. For more information, email Guillermo Scaglia at gscaglia@lsu.edu.

If you have any important dates that you would like to have listed in this section, e-mail us at anne@lafarmranch.com

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