



Commodity Advisory Council Meeting

**Group Session Notes
February 24, 2011**

**COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL GROUP SESSION NOTES
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GROUP SESSION NOTES

Apiculture Session: 6 Attendees

MSU Chair – Judy Breland

Producer Chair/Chair Elect – Steve Coy

- Bee keepers needs a person for bee -keepers – a specialist.
- Educational programs for general public as well as bee-keepers – some interactive video
- Local information for newspapers.
- Support bee-keeping programming that is on-going through Bureau of Plant Industry.
- Need for local research and applied research.
- MBA membership ~ 400-600 - Varying from year to year.
- More than 25 commercial bee-keepers – large portion of these are migratory and depend on MS to rebuild these operations (hive #'s) to production levels so they can return to home state and produce honey and pollinate crops.
- People call me wanting to purchase bees for garden.
- Harry Fulton and Dr. Collison have retired. They have been conducting Beginner Bee-keeper workshops (Extension Edu.) This will leave a void that MS Extension is not currently able to fill.
- Small scale, sideline and commercial bee-keepers of MS would benefit from an Apiculture Extension/Research Specialist.
- Research – Improved small hives beetle control - Selection of mite Resisten Stock –How to do This – Increased availability of Queens and Queen Production.
- People almost always ask how my bees are doing and have I suffered from CCO. The public aware and concern about honeybees.
- Would like to know if an accurate estimation of MS economic impact of bee-keeping and pollination has on the state of MS.

Commercial Horticulture: 12 Attendees

MSU Chair – Gene Blythe

Producer Chair – Mike Keith

- All attendees introduced themselves and discussed their companies, focus, and horticulture interest.
- Lelia noted that Gardening Through Seasons DVD is now available.
- Mike Keith (President of MNLA) noted he is learning more about the Extension Service and the information they have available. Lelia noted that producers should feel free to call their Extension representatives any time.

Commercial Horticulture continued.....

- James Mills provided some history on his company and the help that has been provided by state pathologist Dr. Henn.
- James Mills stated that the immigration problem is critical to the survival of the nursery industry. Support is needed from MS State through their political connections. MS State should have more political clout than MNLA. Mr. Mills discussed the challenges of dealing with the H2A program to obtain employees. Dan Batson noted that there can be a lot of turnover using the H2A program. Local residents typically do not want to do the type of labor required at container and field nurseries. Both Dan Batson and James Mills emphasized that labor availability and immigration issues are far more critical than other economic issues. Dan Batson noted that a large lettuce producer has moved his operation to Mexico due to excessive regulation.
- There is a concern that state legislation would impose major fines for an employer to hire an illegal employee. The problem is that verification is very difficult, especially with falsified documents.
- Barbara Levy noted the need for fast, reliable internet access in rural areas. This is very important for conducting business. There is currently a Broadband Access initiative in the State, but it is still some time away.
- Mike Levy noted that more growers are dealing with pay-by-can when dealing with bon stores.
- Dan Batson noted that MS State research is on the right track with focus on alternative substrate materials. The need has come about due to the increasing use of pine bark of bio-fuel, which has reduced bark availability (and also increased price).
- Dan Batson and Mike Levy noted that nursery automation will continue to increase in importance in keeping costs down.
- Barbara Levy noted the need for more information on alternative heating fuels for greenhouse operations. This could be needed for both large and small growers. Barbara noted that affordable systems are needed for small growers. Mike Reed noted that Hardy Manufacturers is involved in alternative heating. The newer systems burn very efficiently and produce very little ash.
- Mike Levy noted that biological controls are becoming more available and can have useful application in nurseries for insect problems such as thrips. There is a huge learning curve with incorporating beneficial controls into a production system. Lelia noted that Blake Layton is the state entomologist for nurseries at MS State. Barbara Levy would like to pursue a joint university-nursery grant on use of beneficial. James Mills noted that a few minutes of internet shopping can save a growers lots of money on insecticides and fungicides.
- James Mills noted that niche markets will be the key to future success in the nursery industry.
- Lisa reported that a nursery in George County is starting to market using Facebook. There is a need for training in use of social media for selling plants.

Forestry Session: 12 Attendees

MSU Chair – Andy Londo (sitting in for Glenn Hughes)

Producer Chair – Perry Meyers, Jackson County

Producer Chair Elect – Walt Moeller, Jeff Davis County

- Bio-fuels – look into mobile units to utilize storm damage materials.
- Control/Management of wild hogs – need more information on how to communicate to the public.
- Control/Identification of other invasive, across the landscape, not only individual landowners.
- More information on bio-fuels and viability, processes impact to southeast MS – policies.
- CO60 VGrass & Kudzu, Privet – Control & ID
- Prescribed burning information – liability, use, how to burn.
- How do forests contribute to ground water quality, quantity, carbon storage and need more research and outreach. How do we evaluate environmental services provided by forests?
- Develop a short course C2-4 hrs on prescribed burning, not to be a prescribed burn manager, but to be aware of legal aspects – afraid of liability.
- Watershed, TMDL's, any information on water quality.
- SMZ management/BMPS
- An acronym dictionary to explain what we're talking about.
- Can do multi county programs – is it better/more efficient? Develop a strategy.
- Teleconference with CFA leaders to promote/develop programs, have a yearly CFA meeting in district to plan programs, activities, collaborate with MFBB.
- Biomass renewable energy conference in Beau Rivage in April 2011.
- Another biomass meeting at Imperial Palace in June 2011.
- Need to know the MFBB stance on many forestry issues and need more info on what the issues are.

Fruit Session: 14 Attendees

MSU Chair – Wayne Porter

Producer Chair – James Richmond

- Strawberry – advancing season earlier in year – deer major problem – colder season has set advancement back – deer tore holes in Remay row covers and ate strawberries plants.
- Production acreage down in area last several years – high tunnel.
- Blueberries in high tunnel – will grow rabbiteye and southern highbush types in high tunnels – looking at advancing growing season by adding two weeks on early side; will also look at disease pressure in tunnels.
- Fall-bearing blackberries - proposed research will look at pruning techniques to delay harvest till late fall.
- Blueberry needs – labor will be crucial this year.
- The illegal immigrant situation cause negative input from local people.
- The late season last year kept berries from maturing until late – its normal market window was missed.

Fruit continued.....

- At present there is a glut in its market due to overplanting.
- Strawberry needs – weather affects the strawberry crop – know where your market is before you plant. At present this looks like it could be a good year.
- High tunnel strawberries – no weather losses inside and outside rain damaged 60-80% of marketable fruit.
- Peaches – retail in its way to go with peaches for marketing.
- Chill hours are crucial for peach production – select varieties to meet your area.
- Citrus – satsumas and kumquats most cold tolerant.
- Lemons & Limes will start freezing in upper 20s degrees. Not recommended for MS.
- ‘Meyer’ lemon - cross between lemon and orange – protection is necessary to grow citrus; either in container that can be brought or possibly in tunnels.

Home Horticulture Session: 14 Attendees

MSU Chair – Gary Bachman

Producer Chair – none selected

- Open discussion.
- MSU-ES – home gardener emphasis in programming (vegetables) major interest – use nursery production template – containers, high density.
- Home vegetable gardening – source of extra income may be one driving force to increased interest.
- Suggestion for programming is to cover harvesting and preserving canning etc. for vegetables.
- Interest in community gardens & home demonstration type programs for yesteryear.
- Fertilizer sources for home gardeners – availability & restrictions (chicken litter, manure, compost)
- Promote container gardening for city dwellers, self watering, etc.
- Support for Gary & his position as face of Horticulture (Southern Gardening) expressed by nurseryman.
- Suggestion for Gary to educate public on new varieties based on crop availability (expressed by growers). Gary is addressing this issue.
- Are there new azaleas coming on the market more tolerant of heat. New one called “Watch It” recommended (re-bloomer) by Dan Batson had for 12 years.
- What’s Extension doing to protect homeowners from Chili Thrips? Not much because do not have entomologist here. Most devastating insect problem coming in opinion of James Mills (in New Orleans and Slidell)
- Pink Mealy bug could be another menace (in New Orleans) found on hibiscus. Conserve & merit – controls them (easy to control). Spinosad
- Educate homeowners on repeated use of same pesticide to deserve resistance.
- Just pesticide use in coverage better education for homeowner’s safety issues.
- Promote better labeling on plants. Shrub & tree rating guide – cold hardiness, disease and insect resistance put out by LSU – suggestion.

Home Horticulture continued...

- Knockout roses – do they decline after several years. (1) Two-fold for decline- bad year last year for blackspot. (2) Leaf fungus disease or knock-out more prevalent. Future for knockouts – problems will develop in time. (1) Cloudy sp, cool, foggy – develop downy mildew – (2) Chili thrips will eventually get them. Research LSU shows that thinning reduces decline. Recommendation is to cut back 2/3 now (Feb) & 1/3 in August.
- Bradford Pear – being attacked by fire blight, what to do, remove & replace with something else. Cleveland selects CV more resistant.
- Florida MG plant guide could be useful to determine hardiness & make recommendations.
- Success of MG program – generational (baby boomers want to give back and learn about gardening)
- Market mixed demographic - with younger clientele expected.
- Product – organic, perfect local grown heirloom – growing interest, Work on using determinate rather than indeterminate tomatoes for S. MS.

Horse: 16 Attendees

MSU Chair – Brad Jones

Producer Chair – Suzanne Cook

Producer Chair Elect – Brad Woods

- Jane Parish – top priority at MSU in filling the equine position.
- A recommendation from this advisory committee is to push forward with the hiring of an Equine Specialist.
- Programs for equine can still be conducted if a county extension agent or area agent would like to conduct the program.
- Biggest topic is the push to re-open the slaughter of horses in Mississippi.
- Farm Bureau is looking at what other states are pushing for this as well.
- There are avenues in MS being looked at to legally re-opening horse slaughter for animal consumption.
- The other idea is to make sure MS is educated at the inhumane treatment of horses since horse slaughter was closed and the extreme negative effect it has had on the horse industry.
- Need a big push for education on horses in agriculture.

Livestock: 22 Attendees

MSU Chair – Daniel Rivera

Producer Chair – Bobby Jones

Extension Program updates:

- Jane Parish updated on filling vacant positions for stocker specialist and equine specialist.
- Daniel Rivera gave update on programs: AI School, Master Cattleman School, Beef Cattle Bootcamp – April, Acquired Cattle Nutrition Workshop – March, Fed Beef

Livestock continued...

Challenge – October, Beef Cattle Genetics – Learn at Lunch (September 2011), BQH
Training – White sand (April 5th) Tylertown (April 4th)

- Mike Keene – updates on Board Sale – Spring Winona (April 5th), Summer – Hattiesburg (August 1st), Heifer Sale – 10 years (August), Bull Test Sale (March 3rd @ Hinds), Research Update – Gin Trash Trail, Implant Trail & Strategies, Bail age Study with LSU, Summer Grazing Strategies.

Producer Input:

- Extension to help promote 4-H Livestock program. Getting more youth involved in showing.
- More programs on production based on input cost.
- Programs on managing forages with intensive grazing.
- Sweet potato trails as feed sources. Nutritional value and more info on feeding safely.
- Research on Bale age & moisture testing.
- Cost analysis on rye grass has vs. other forages.
- Farm Bureau Update
- Litter transport ban to be lifted on Monday if no new cases of litter in the state.
- Animal welfare bill update. Successful compromise with Human Society on this bill. Made sure there was a separation in the bill from dogs & cats to livestock. The bill going to House floor for vote.

Seafood & Aquaculture: 5 Attendees

MSU Chair – Dave Burrage / Ben Posadas

Producer Chair – Bobby Hendry

- Declining prices of products – catfish.
- Foreign competition.
- Increasing inspection of catfish processing plants exporting to the US.
- Grower & trading largemouth bass for stockers & high end markets.
- TAA for fish farmers and shrimpers.
- Interaction to MSU Aquaculture faculty with fish farmers.
- Selection of species in response to market demand.
- Use of e-Bay for marketing shipped through UPS.
- Cost of live hauling due to rising fuel costs.
- Records of production or processing.
- Keeping costs down by using improved water management.
- Bird predation.
- Pond aviation.
- Shedding crabs.
- Pruning family business using family labor.

Soybean & Peanuts: 2 Attendees

MSU Chair – Mike Howell / Randy Smith

No Producers in Attendance

Mike Howell reports:

- The Peanut/Soybean group met and discussed the need to fill the vacant soybean specialist position. This position has been vacant for several months, and there is currently little support of this crop in the state. We also discussed the need for research on Roundup resistant weeds, especially pigweed in the state. This has become a major problem in other areas of the country, and resistant populations have been identified in Mississippi. Finally, we discussed the need for educational programming on controlling wild hogs. This is becoming an increasing problem with not only row crop producers, but with timber producers and cattlemen as well.

Randy Smith reports:

- We had no participants in the meeting but Dr. Dan Reynolds was present and we discussed how we could better work together between the university staff and Extension.
- I gave an update to the group of what we had accomplished last year and our plans for this year relative to row crops.

2010 Report on Soybean:

1. Soybeans acres will be up in 2011 due to the price of soybeans in the region.
2. In 2010 we conducted five soybean variety trials where we showed the strengths and weaknesses of GP IV RR varieties vs GP V RR varieties and showed yield and growth patterns of about 20 different varieties. The yields were as high as 80 Bu/Ac for some varieties.
3. We conducted for the third year soybeans and corn comparisons planted behind ryegrass cattle and showed for soybeans a \$750.00/Ac net return from the cattle and soybeans. Corn also showed a positive net return but not as much as with the soybeans.
4. Conducted two soybean seed quality trials evaluating how to improve seed quality using fungicides and insecticides. This was the second year of this study and the second year we have shown a significant positive return on investment from the treatments.
5. These trials have growers depending on the Extension service for varietal and spray information and as a result we are seeing a slight growth in acres for 2011.

2010 Report on Corn:

1. We conducted five corn variety trials with great response from the growers and great results in yield and quality. This has allowed us to be the go to people for varietal information on new technologies and germplasms relative to growers and dealers. The industry has been very supportive of our program and we continue to grow.

2011 Corn and Soybeans:

1. We will conduct eight corn variety trials evaluating different technologies and germplasms to help growers make good decisions. This program is supported by the Corn Promotion Board and the different Basic companies.
2. We will conduct ten soybean variety trials to evaluate the strengths of different GP IV RR and GP V RR germplasms from a yield and economic value.
3. We will continue the soybeans behind ryegrass cattle to show-case the economic benefits from using a piece of land for 365 days and basically double cropping this land. It will be extended to White Sands in conjunction with Dr. Daniel Rivera.

Vegetables: 21 Attendees

MSU Chair – Christine Coker

Producer Chair – James Richmond

Producer Chair Elect: Jackie Belcher

- pH for small vegetable plots
- March 15 – Webinar Pecan Production
- Tomatoes – Amelia, Billarosa, BWV resistance, Applause – early, large fruit
- Fungicide for melons – Bravo & Kocide / Quadris rotation Bravo can discolor rind
- Color of plastic mulch affects yield?
- Squash
- Wal-mart interested in local, Grower must provide a 20 pallet minimum, have DUNS#, and hold a \$2M bond
- Round-up ready sweet corn is due on the market in 2013
- Labor issues

James Richmond:

- What is ideal Ph for home garden 5.8 to 6.5
- Soil testing still available at cost of \$6.00 per sample.
- Tissue samples \$15.00 per sample.
- Pecan trees not producing.
- Pecan trees are wind pollinated – pollinator trees
- Hard rains during pollination period may reduce pollination
- Nutrient deficiency
- 1/2 lb per inch diameter up to 5# tree
- Phylloxera
- Tomatoes
- What varieties suggested for commercial growers - Amelia, Bellarosa, new variety
- Applause for early tomatoes
- Are results available on pounds of production per plant from high tunnel research?
- Early okra – will be looked at in high tunnel.
- Cantaloupes were tried last year but resulted in a failure.
- Cool season crops look real good during winter in high tunnels.
- What is a good fungicide for watermelon? Are there varieties resistant to anthracnose?

Vegetables continued.....

- How do you tell when mini or personal size melons are ripe?
- Will using a narrower plastic on melons affect yield?
- Color of plastic – affect on yield on vegetable crops.
- What's feasibility of green bean for commercial market? Large acreage
- The market requires fresh, high quality, produce and fruit, subsidies for fruits and vegetables?
- Food safety will be a major issue in the future.
- Labor will be critical for vegetable growers that have to have extra labor.
- Website updated with current information.

Wild hog management came up in several sessions. Please use the link below:



<http://www.wildpiginfo.com>

