



COASTAL RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Producer Advisory Council Meeting**

**Group Session Notes  
February 25, 2014**

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

## ANNUAL MEETING

of the

### Coastal Research and Extension Center Producer Advisory Council Meeting

#### AGENDA

- 9:00 a.m. Registration..... Coastal Research and Extension Center
- 9:20 a.m. Welcome/Introduction ..... Dr. Patricia Knight
- 9:30 a.m. Commodity Group Sessions I .....CREC Rooms
- Commercial Ornamental Horticulture
  - Fruits
  - Horse
  - Agronomic Crops (Cotton and Corn)
  - Forestry
  - Seafood and Aquaculture
- 11:00 a.m. Commodity Group Sessions II
- Home Horticulture
  - Vegetables
  - Livestock
  - Agronomic Crops (Soybeans and Peanuts)
  - Apiculture
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. USDA Comments
- 1:30 p.m. Farm Bureau Comments
- 1:45 p.m. MSU-ES Comments
- 2:00 p.m. MAFES Comments
- 2:15 p.m. Commodity Reports Producer Chairs
- 3:00 p.m. Wrap-up and Adjourn

# GROUP SESSIONS AND CHAIRS

## SESSION 1

- Commercial Ornamental Horticulture .....Dr. Eugene Blythe, Tim Ray
- Fruits .....Eric Stafne, Paul Cavanaugh
- Horse .....Roy Higdon, Robert Johnson
- Agronomic Crops (Cotton and Corn) ..... Randy Smith, Don Mitchell
- Forestry ..... Dr. Glenn Hughes, Perry Myers
- Seafood and Aquaculture .....Dave Burrage, Leonard Carrubba

## SESSION II

- Home Horticulture .....Dr. Gary Bachman, Damion Flynn
- Vegetables.....Dr. Christine Coker, Bonnie Lippincott
- Livestock.....Brad Jones, Ken Mallette
- Agronomic Crops (Soybeans and Peanuts)..... Randy Smith, Don Mitchell
- Apiculture .....Dr. Judith Breland, D.L. Wesley (not in attendance)

# **GROUP SESSION NOTES**

Coastal Research and Extension Center  
Annual Producer Advisory Council Meeting

## **SESSION 1**

### **COMMERCIAL ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE**

MSU Chair: Dr. Eugene Blythe

Producer Chair: Tim Ray

Attendees: 21

Gene Blythe noted that the annual Ornamental Horticulture Field Day will be held on October 2, 2014 at the experiment station in Poplarville.

Jeff Howell of Rocky Creek Nursery opened the discussion by noting that the housing market is on the rise; which suggests that there will be a good demand for nursery crops this year. Dan Batson of Green Forest Nursery agreed and added that the unusually cold weather has affected nursery crops to the north, which should be good for nurseries in our area.

James Mills of K&M Nursery noted that consumers are looking for roses that are care-free and research/evaluation should be done on disease-resistant cut-flower varieties. Dan Batson noted that breeding work is needed for disease- and stress-resistant ornamentals.

There was consensus that consumers want to plant low-maintenance plants. Jeff Howell noted that the low-maintenance 'Phantom' hydrangea was a good seller for his nursery.

Kevin Brown of the Mississippi Farm Bureau discussed the Farm Bill and noted that it has potential for large grants available for ornamental plant research. Also, the Farm Bureau is supporting tax-exempt status for sale of ornamental plants by the producer.

Lisa Shook, the new horticulture instructor for Pearl River Central High School, gave an update on her teaching program and is excited about her new challenges.

Dan Batson initiated a discussion on the changing demographics of consumers and noted that many people buy many products over the internet. It is important that producers know how to market to various generations of consumers. James Mills reported good success with internet sales of his roses and noted that internet sales are a growing trend.

Dan Batson suggested that the research results from the experiment station in Poplarville be more widely shared via emails, newsletter, or a website, and to help boost attendance at the annual field day in Poplarville. Gene Blythe and Gary Bachman will look into ways that Extension can help disseminate these research results.

## **FRUITS**

MSU Chair: Dr. Eric Stafne

Producer Chair: Paul Cavanaugh

Attendees: 33

In the Fruit section of the Producer Advisory Council, the discussion began with the new pest, spotted wing drosophila (SWD). Growers, USDA-ARS personnel and MSU personnel were all involved in the discussion. Blueberry producers are especially concerned about this pest. Better traps and spray recommendations may help control the pest better than in past years. However, the limited number of insecticides with a short pre-harvest interval gives blueberry producers few options. The SWD was first found in Mississippi in 2010. It thrives in cold weather, so the cold winter weather of 2013-2014 will have no effect on populations. Overall, it has become one of the top pest problems in the U.S. Spray recommendations are based on fruit ripeness, as the pest attacks fruit just as it begins to change color. Identification is also an issue because the fly is very small and looks similar to other fruit flies. Once the egg is laid into the fruit it takes about 48 hours to hatch. Sprays should be rotated with different modes of action so the pest cannot develop resistance.

Other pests were also discussed, including blueberry gall midge. It lays eggs in the buds and sprays like Malathion must be sprayed early in the season to control it. Exobasidium fungus of blueberry was also talked about and methods of control. A dormant spray of liquid lime sulfur was suggested as a potential control.

The discussion was wide ranging after the lengthy blueberry pest discussion. There were requests for more organic production information from MSU Extension. Questions on the most effective herbicides for certain weed pests, such as Callisto for nutsedge control. Citrus was also discussed, especially about cold damage and how to prune a tree. High tunnels for fruit production also came up. Positives include lengthening the growing season, but the economic viability is still unclear. Strawberries and blackberries may have the most potential for profit, whereas other fruit crops are unknown. Small producers may have more opportunities for profit using a high tunnel.

## **HORSE**

MSU Chair: Roy Higdon

Producer Chair: Robert (Bob) Johnson

Attendees: 18

Horse and Small Ruminant Section:

Roy Higdon gives an overview of the horse industry in MS. Sadly there is still no horse slaughter in the USA.

Master Horseman Program is being planned to begin soon in Adams County for the State.

Horse Judging Camp offered through AQHA in Canton, MS on March 11-12 for youth and adults.

Horse Specialist position on campus in opened and advertised.

Dr. John Blanton gave an overview of equine activities on campus.

8 ponies, at MSU being used for nutrition and other studies on south farm.

AQHA Shadow Program. Nikki Jefcoat in Lauderdale Co. worked with 8 youth from around the state during Dixie National Quarter Horse Show.

Biggest issue with small ruminant producers is marketing. Location of viable markets and slaughter facilities.

Forage and grazing systems for small ruminants.

Provide ADS with common questions/problems taken at county offices from small ruminant producers.

#### **AGRONOMIC CROPS (Cotton, Corn, and Soybeans combined from session 1 & 2)**

MSU Chair: Randy Smith

Producer Chair: Don Mitchell

Attendees: Surveyed via telephone

**Cotton:** Told the group that we had conducted two cotton trials evaluating soil and foliar applied microbes to cotton. Trials were mapped in-season and box mapped. The results were very positive.

**Corn:** Conducted five corn hybrid variety trials with excellent results. Irrigated trials were higher yielding in 2014 but did not provide a significant economic response as in 2012.

**Soybeans:** We conducted ten soybean variety trials the yields ranged from a high of 97 bu/ac to a low of 35 bu/ac. Data obtained from green stem has been very beneficial. Corporate reps who are using the data when surveyed say that growers are liking the data and find it very beneficial. This data has covered much of Mississippi, South Alabama and South and Central Louisiana. Soybeans behind with the ryegrass cattle has again provided excellent economic impacts and we are seeing an increase in in-row breaking and purchase of equipment to make this successful. We are seeing this approach increase especially with the in-row breaking one-pass planting system in South Mississippi, Kentucky and Georgia and some interest in the MS. Delta. Because of data presentation, we are increasing the number of companies involved in our testing program and desiring to be a part of it.

**Wheat:** We continue to check wheat fields for growers and were very successful last year. Wheat acres are down from last year due to price and lateness of following with soybeans.

Grower and Corporate Advice:

1. Continue with the variety testing program
2. Continue evaluating potash and green stem.
3. Continue evaluating vertical breaking benefits behind cattle or not.
4. Continue monitoring crop and helping make decisions
5. Resistant management of palmer amaranth and tall water hemp.
  - a. Cover Crops and Liberty
6. Continue with fungicide and insecticide economic feasibility Link
7. How to reduce production costs without reducing yields.

Growers Surveyed

1. Dirk Layton
2. Steve Maddox
3. Sam Maddox
4. Don Mitchell
5. Keith Lucas
6. Richard Hay
7. Frank Holmes
8. Curtis Page
9. Keith Braucht

**FORESTRY**

MSU Chair - Dr. Glenn Hughes

2014 Producer Chair – Mr. Perry Meyers

16 present

Welcome and overview by Dr. Glenn Hughes  
Chair Elect 2015 - Walt Moeller

Review of Last Year's Priorities:

- Last year's suggestion to separate Forestry and Livestock Sessions had been heard and for 2014, the time was changed so producers could attend both sessions.
- Economics of forestry (multiple items):
  - Dr. Hughes reviewed the list of Economics of Forestry, a handout provided to the participants. The group added comments to the list.
  - To get forest products recognized as a "USDA commodity" will take work at the Congressional Level. Given the current climate in Washington, there is little chance for this to occur.
  - Invasive species (plant and animal) remain a problem in Mississippi.
    - Discussion on possible funding from the BP Oil spill that will apply to the 6 coastal Counties.
    - Cogon grass remains a serious problem as it spreads rapidly and continuously.
    - Another invasive species, Japanese climbing fern, is also becoming a hazard and most people are not familiar with it.
  - Hancock County identified the problem of down cutting of streams at low-water crossings by putting crossing in level with stream bottom for erosion control.

- Request to develop some “information sheets” on:
  - New Farm bill and its effects on forestry;
  - Silvicultural exemption for forest roads;
  - Herbicides – sheet on herbicides; what chemicals are available for purchase and use “off the shelf,” and at what rates;
    - Need to know what you are trying to kill and what you are trying to save.
  - Can Piney Woods cattle be used to restore pine forests?;
  - Wind Throw –potential impacts on longleaf plantings, and efforts to better understand this issue;
  - Make sure people know about the MS Board of Registered Foresters

### New Needs Identified:

- Discussion of timber bridges-- need to educate MDOT and others as these bridges add value to timber market, cost significantly less than conventional bridges, and have a comparable life span. Should promote educating decision-makers (legislators, engineers, others) about possibilities of timber bridges.
- Economics of forestry--policies are increasing the cost of labor in forestry and agriculture. Forestry is listed as industry so migrant labor costs are increased which in turn increases the cost of planting. Pine straw which had been considered piece work is now going to an hourly wage.
- Need for Certified wood – management plans are needed because major companies like Lowe’s and Home depot want certified wood. Mississippi Forestry Commission can write landowners a management plan at no cost if you have 250 acres or less of timberland.
- A good internet site is Mylandplan.com by the American Tree Farm System about developing a management plan. Also, Weyerhaeuser is now helping write management plans. Wild Turkey Federation writes plans at no cost.

### Program needs:

- A program for new family forest landowners. A class on “How to Start Your Family Forest Business.”
- Need to promote the county Forestry Associations.
- Program on fertilization needs in forestry.
- With funding in the Farm Bill for feral hogs there needs to be some education and programming. They are a menace to newly planted trees.
- Prescribed burning teams for the Coastal Area.
- Needs to be coordination between State and County officials on cogongrass problems and control. Counties bushogging cogongrass spreads it across the county roadsides.



## **SEAFOOD AND AQUACULTURE**

MSU Chair: Dave Burrage

Producer Chair: Leonard Carrubba

Attendees: 15

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point:

In the last year, 4 HACCP classes have been provided and over 50 participants from Mississippi have been through the class.

Sanitation Control Procedure Class will be established this year. Two classes in March of this year.

A procedure to monitor and determine chemical hazards in seafood is being set up.

A proposal has been submitted to look at using shrimp shell as packaging material.

MSU's Experience in aquaculture in this region:

- Since '88-89, species and production system wise, Tilapia has grown. At peak it was 25 producers in mid 90's. By 1999-2000 industry almost collapsed. Cannot compete with imported at cheaper prices, other than live.
- Fresh water prawns was another industry. 120 day window. May-September 15. At peak, 2003, 1,400 acres were in production. Price was a contributing factor. Now only a few growers left.
- Salt-water shrimp. Product is very good. Cannot be produced at a competitive price.
- Another contributing factor is Disease Control. As is evidenced by the record high prices of domestic shrimp dues to disease in imported shrimp. Maybe we could collaborate with other states which have experience with this.
- Mississippi does not yet allow off-bottom oyster cultures. This could be a new market to pursue. It has proven to be very profitable in other states.
- MSU can also provide Good Aquaculture Practices Programs if interested.

Look at the sustainable economic feasibility of small scale aquaponics operations.

Perhaps look at a family size aquaponics operation to be feasible for more families in Mississippi. Can it be cost effective and safe?

More use of social media to promote Mississippi Brands to the end consumers to educate them about the quality of our products!

Maybe take a value-added approach with the aquaculture industry, by adding extra value to the end product.

Maybe develop a Mississippi "Certified Seafood System"

## SESSION II

### HOME HORTICULTURE

MSU Chair: Dr. Gary Bachman

Producer Chair: Damion Flynn

Attendees: 17

Problems/success with home/urban landscape.

Additional business in Herbaceous Plants (Polly Cuevas)

When should clean up plants/prune after freeze damage? Be patient, wait until spring. If you clean too early, you may kill your plants.

When should you prune your plants? When Red Maples start blooming; pine pollen appears, take cues from Mother Nature that spring is coming.

After freeze when should you see citrus bud out? Mid-end of March.

Palms

Landscape – weed problems – can find things less expensive than Preen

Clover – Weed-Be-Gone MAX, Weed-Be-Gone Trimec, Weed-Free-Zone

Apply now, may only need one application.

Pond weed controls – Copper Sulfate for Algae, Aquatic Roundup (Aqua Pro)

Must identify weed before you spray anything.

Preemerge – Scotts Halts, hard to find (call local county agent)

Home Soil Testing – hard for homeowners to find recommended products; recommendations usually unclear. Needs to be simplified.

MSU – should produce publications that explain the above in simpler terms so that homeowners know exactly what to do.

Insect Issues – Spotted Wing Drosophila (DWS) – Blueberry threat – fruit leaks juice out – need to spray when fruit begins to turn color.

Crape Myrtle Scale

Chile Thrips – Vegetables, Peppers, (James Mills) Roses- looks like plant was sprayed with Round-up, defoliate leaves overnight – very destructive – Conserve & Merrit together will eradicate it.

Scales on Sago Palms – get into roots and kill plants (insect – will see insect on leaves) Safari (order through wholesaler at [www.Rosemania.com](http://www.Rosemania.com))

James Mills – Rose Bushes – Downey Mildew (cool days/nights) Symptoms – black spot but starts on new growth and I have lesions on cane. Spots stop at veins; if not treated whole rows will be affected.

Polly Cuevas – Organic Gardening – not catching on, hard in South MS, foliar diseases & large number of insect pests, plants look terrible because you can't use pesticides, products not long lasting, must spray weekly, very time consuming.

Vegetable varieties:

- Tomatoes in containers – Galtiath average 2 lbs fruit
- Cherry tomato – super sweet 100 (ripen quickly and get ahead of pest problems)
- Heirloom tomato – interest recently – what are characteristics of heirloom? Old seeds, open pollinated.
- Tomatofest (CA company) many varieties – Heirloom tomato available
- Homestead – pretty in July while other Heirlooms looked awful – pest tolerance for South MS.
- Cherokee Purple – keeps growing
- Marion – seed at Co-op in Starkville

Irrigation Systems – Drip System – Inexpensive for small gardens

Long Beach, MS – was Radish Capitol of World years ago. Suggestion: more vegetables need to be grown here.

H2A programs – provide help.

Beth Lotz

- Sweet Orange Scab – mimics regular orange scab – lesions on fruit but doesn't affect quality – surface issue only.
- Citrus Canker – Louisiana – four parishes quarantined now. Pearl River County should watch out – will kill the tree.
- Asian Citrus – can carry citrus green CA, FI, GA quarantined – found one tree in Hancock County years ago – quarantined but not problem here.

Fire Blight – Bradford Pear problem – mayhaw

Home and Garden Show – Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum – March 7,8,9.

## **VEGETABLES**

MSU Chair: Dr. Christine Coker

Producer Chair: Bonnie Lippincott

Producer Chair-elect: Pamela Blanchard

Attendees: 20

GHP and GAP workshop to be held at CREC March 11 to introduce certification procedures to growers.

MSU short course on greenhouse tomato production.

NRCS is still offering cost-share for high tunnels.

### *Suggested Research:*

Watermelon variety trials - George County farmers are growing seeded Jubilee-types such as 'Starbright', 'Delta', and 'Big Stripes'.

Heirloom varieties - Consumers would like organic, but pest control is especially difficult with heirloom organics, particularly stink bugs.

### *Research Update:*

Christian Stephenson is evaluating the economics of various best management practices for pest populations in small-acreage farm/garden situations. Study compares conventional calendar sprays, IPM approach, and organic methods. The project is also comparing pest pressure in- and outside of high tunnels.

Areas of Discussion:

### *Pests:*

White flies are disease vectors. Aphids and whiteflies have hundreds of hosts. Good field sanitation is important. When using chemicals: THE LABEL IS THE LAW! Mice can be problematic in some crops.

GMOs: GMOs are Genetically Modified Organisms as opposed to hybrid varieties. Consumer education is needed to differentiate between GMOs and hybrids and to explain the usefulness of each.

### *Irradiation:*

Frank Benso of Gateway America discussed irradiation of imports and exports through Gulfport facility. Examples were persimmons coming through in April, peaches exported to Mexico and guava imported from Mexico. Mississippi could lead nation in food safety. Low dose irradiation does not harm fruit, but extends shelf-life.

### *Varieties:*

Suggested sweet corn varieties include 'Merit', 'Obsession II'. Common tomato varieties are 'Amelia', 'Crista', and 'Bella Rosa'.

### *Crop Insurance:*

Getting crop insurance for specialty crops is problematic and expensive.

## **LIVESTOCK**

MSU Chair: Brad Jones

Producer Chair: Ken Mallette

Attendees: 33

Updates from Research at Experiment Stations and Campus.

### **Youth Programs**

Youth Cattle Boot Camp at Whitesand in Poplarville – April.

Heifer Development Contest for kids age 14-18 in the state.

10 Month Contest to raise 3 heifers.

### **Whitesand Research**

Feed supplementation study complete on cattle weight gain vs. pasture fertilization for weight gain.

Sylva pasture research in McNeil – September 2014 – Field Day.

Research on long-range de-wormer on rye grass cattle for cost and performance

Whitesand will be planning the yearly field day.

### **Upcoming Programs for Campus**

Hinds Bull Test and BCIA Sale – 78 bulls on March 6 in Raymond.

Beef Myth-busters Short-course on March 11 – Hattiesburg.

Beef Cattle Boot-camp in April in Raymond.

Deep South Stocker Conference in Meridian – August 8.

Cattlemen's College – West Point & Brookhaven – August.

### **Vet School Research**

Stocker cattle receiving research.

Ecoli in beef cattle and food safety.

Pneumonia research in pre-weaned cattle.

Trichomoniasis in bulls in the state.

Certification of vets for testing.

### **Farm Bureau**

March 4 – Ag Day at the Capital

Farm Families of MS selling tickets on animals bought at sale of champions to support Farm Family campaign.

Farm Bureau will be offering educational meeting to discuss farm bill and what will be offered to livestock producers.

Several new producer sales to support MS raised breeding cattle and bulls and MS premium sales in November.

Brad Jones told of Russian Experience A-I.

## **APICULTURE**

MSU Chair – Dr. Judith Breland

Producer Chair - D.L. Wesley (not in attendance)

14 Attendees

In the absence of the chair, Dr. Breland welcomed those present to the meeting. She stated the purpose of the meeting was to determine the needs of Apiculture that could be addressed by MSU Extension Service. Following introductions of those present, Dr. Breland posed questions to the group. Discussion followed each question.

### ***What is your most pressing question (need) about beekeeping?***

Understanding the best ways to market honey. How to establish honey as a certified “Organic” honey product.

### ***What is your major concern about beekeeping?***

Spraying for insect and mosquitos causes kill-off of bees. Can contact local authorities to restrict spraying within the area of hives of certain products and at certain times of day. Also concerned about seed imbedded with substances to insure pest control that will ultimately kill bees.

### ***What do you want Extension to do for you?***

On local markets for honey there is not a way to know that whether or not what you are getting is real honey. Honey is unique in that it does not require refrigeration, does not have a problem of spoilage, but need to help the public understand that what is in a jar unlabeled, may or may not be 100% honey. Need information and assistance on logos for businesses, business cards, Facebook page, and merchandising plan development. Publication on honey and on labeling of honey.

- Need assistance with classes in beekeeping and educational programs for meetings
- Develop a program as part of Master Gardeners on Bees.
- May even develop a “Master Beekeeper” program.
- Work with development of 4-H Beekeeping as a project.

### ***What do you think the local organization (of beekeepers) should be doing?***

- Connecting with other organized groups to present a single message on honey and the importance of bees.
- Can also provide helpful hints for beekeepers and for the public about bees.

The group expressed appreciation for the appointment of Dr. Jeff Harris as a Specialist, and the recognition of bees in the food chain process.



**Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine  
MSU-Extension Service-MAFES**

**PRODUCER ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTS  
21 COUNTIES AND 6 RESEARCH UNITS**

**COUNTIES:**

Clarke  
Covington  
Forrest  
George  
Greene  
Hancock  
Harrison  
Jackson  
Jasper  
Jefferson Davis  
Jones  
Kemper  
Lamar  
Lauderdale  
Marion  
Neshoba  
Newton  
Pearl River  
Perry  
Stone  
Wayne

**RESEARCH UNITS:**

Beaumont Horticulture Unit  
Coastal Research and Extension Center  
Experimental Seafood Processing  
Laboratory, Pascagoula  
South MS Experiment Station,  
Poplarville  
White Sands, Poplarville  
McNeill Units