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# Ronnie Anderson retires as Farm Bureau President after 31 Years



**Ronnie Anderson**  
President, Louisiana  
Farm Bureau  
Federation

This will be my last column for the Louisiana Farm and Ranch magazine. I want to start by thanking each and every one of you who have read my columns throughout the years.

This magazine has served as a wonderful voice for Louisiana's farmers, in the same way the organization that I have served for the past half-century

has also been a voice for Louisiana agriculture. It has been my distinct honor to serve both as a board member and, for these last 31 years, as president of the Louisiana Farm Bureau to advance that voice throughout the world.

When I announced my retirement earlier this

year, I certainly did not expect to spend these last few remaining months lying down! As I'm sure you've heard by now, I contracted COVID-19 and was put into a medically induced coma and placed on a ventilator. The many notes, messages, thoughts, and prayers that I have gotten from folks all over the state has been as overwhelming as it has been uplifting. On behalf of my wife Vivian, my children, grandchildren and other family members, your response to my illness and to my family's needs has certainly sped up my recovery.

As you all know, rain or shine, the business of agriculture continues no matter what. That hasn't stopped these past few months and it won't stop upon my retirement. There will always be challenges and opportunities that farmers will have to take head on. This year certainly has showcased its difficulties for both agriculture and our nation as a whole.

In 2022, Farm Bureau will celebrate its centennial. Not long after that, we'll have to start down the road for another Farm Bill. In these interven-

ing years, we'll face challenges from weather, low commodity prices, regulations and hostile activists, just to name a few.

What I do know is we'll be here in 2022 and for a hundred more years, as long as we work together for the benefit of our producers and consumers alike.

I would like to thank each and every board member that I served with during my tenure at Farm Bureau. Though we've had healthy and spirited debates, I can say for sure that we've always made the best possible decisions to guide both our organization and agriculture forward.

I would also like to thank the staff of Farm Bureau that works hard every day to make sure the needs of our farmers and membership are met. I would especially like to thank the Assistants to the president who have served under me-- Jim Monroe and Kyle McCann. Kyle just took over last year after serving for many years in the commodity department. He has provided steady

SEE ANDERSON, PAGE 5

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# League's educational outreach



*Jim Simon  
 General Manager  
 American  
 Sugarcane League*

The school year, abbreviated by the covid-19 pandemic, is officially over and Louisiana's sugar industry played a small role in educating more than 1,500 students on the important role sugarcane plays in our state economy.

The American Sugar Cane League set aside more than \$14,000 to help defray field trip transportation costs for school children to visit local museums with strong sugarcane exhibits.

"When my father was a young farmer, more families were associated with rural life and farming sugarcane. They knew what it was like to make your own cane syrup, raise chickens, cattle, pigs and cash crops," said Gregory Gravois, president of the American Sugar Cane League.

Gravois is a St. James Parish sugarcane farmer and heads up his Blackberry Farms operation which manages more than 4,000 cane acres.

"In today's consumer society, school-aged children

are more removed from the farm than at any time in history. We think it's important for kids to have an idea of the role sugarcane played in building their communities throughout the cane belt," Gravois said. The cane belt is the 23-parish area stretching from Rapides in the north to Cameron in the southwest and Terrebonne Parish in southeastern Louisiana, Gravois explained.

"Sugarcane was the main reason farmers settled in Louisiana in the early 19th century and helped Louisiana become part of the United States in 1812," Gravois said. "I know this because I'm a farmer, but the next generations of Louisiana citizens may not understand the significance unless they are taught the history and economics."

Gravois and the League's public relations committee got together and identified the museums with strong sugarcane emphases. Committee Chair Bryan Simon said an obvious choice was the Bayou Teche Museum in Iberia Parish.

"Iberia is one of the top sugarcane parishes in the state and the Bayou Teche Museum in New Iberia has a very strong sugarcane exhibit," Simon said. "We also determined the Jeanerette Museum in St. Mary

SEE OUTREACH, NEXT PAGE

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## OUTREACH CONTINUED

Parish, the West Baton Rouge Parish Museum in Port Allen and Bayou Country Children's Museum in Thibodaux would really help deliver a positive message about sugarcane."

Mona Stansbury of the Jeanerette Museum reported that more than 640 students from nine Iberia Parish and three St. Mary Parish schools visited the Jeanerette Museum.

"Students are taking advantage of your organization's generosity," Stansbury said. "You've made our museum busy."

Marcia Patout, director of the Bayou Teche Museum said more than 300 schoolchildren toured through the Bayou Teche Museum.

The Bayou Country Children's Museum hosted than 425 students while the West Baton Rouge Museum entertained more than 240. One of the schools that visited the WBR Museum came from Calcasieu Parish, a sugarcane producing area on the far western edge of the cane belt.

Alice Viator, head of the social studies program in Iberia Parish, was very appreciative of our work. "Two of my goals in our district are to improve equity ensuring that all students have the same opportunities and to better incorporate our local history into our state, national and world history curriculums. Your grant will allow us to address both of these goals. Thank you."

Sugarcane continues to be Louisiana's number one row crop and the League will continue to sponsor meaningful educational outreach to help the public to understand what it means to be a 21st century sugarcane producer.

Other members of the League's public relations committee are Lane Blanchard, Mark Engemann, Ricky Gonsoulin, Micah Guidry, Chad Hanks, Rob Judice, Will Legendre, Mark Patout and Frank Sotile Jr.

## ANDERSON: Thank God for his grace

FROM PAGE 3

leadership throughout my illness and I know he will continue to serve you now and in the future.

I want to thank my family who has not only stuck by my side through this illness, but through the many years of me serving on the board of Farm Bureau. Being president takes you away many weeknights and weekends on long trips all around the country and the world. Their patience and support has been essential in keeping me going.

I would like to thank God for showing his grace to allow me to serve in this position for more than three decades. The Bible says to have faith like a mustard seed, and I've seen that faith and hope with every seed planted each season throughout this state.

With Faith, Family and Farm Bureau, know Louisiana's farmers can tackle any challenges that may come along. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to serve you all these many years.

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# Pinkeye in beef cattle

## What is it?

Pinkeye, also known as infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK), is a common disease of beef cattle that causes redness and ulcers in the eye. It is very painful and causes

minerals (particularly copper and selenium).

Pinkeye is known to occur at all seasons of the year and in all breeds of cattle, but it is most common in summer months and in cattle with no pigment on their eyelids. It's more common in calves than older cattle and in bull calves more than heifer calves.

Pinkeye results in mild to severe symptoms and even permanent blindness. Excessive tearing and squinting of the affected eye are the two signs most commonly observed. As the disease progresses, the cornea becomes cloudy or white, and an ulcer (a round indentation) frequently develops near the center of the cornea. Cattle with pinkeye keep the affected eye or eyes closed because of pain and to avoid bright sunlight.

## How is it treated?

Early treatment is essential not only in limiting the production impacts but also in preventing spread in the herd. It's best to gather and treat only the affected animals. Congregating cattle in corrals and running them through the chute increases the chance of dust irritation and contact between animals, which increases the chance of spreading the disease. If more than 10-20% of animals in a herd are affected, it

may be beneficial to treat all cattle. Care should be taken to minimize dust exposure and stress. This is a situation where low-stress cattle-handling techniques are extremely beneficial.

The best treatment for pinkeye is an injectable antibiotic. As of this writing, the approved products to treat pinkeye include long-acting tetracycline products (for example, LA-200®, Biomycin 200®, etc.) and tulathromycin (Draxxin®). There may be resistance in some herds to these treatments, especially to oxytetracycline, and a veterinarian may need to conduct a culture and sensitivity test to determine which antibiotic to use.

Placing a patch over the eye following treatment is also recommended. It protects the eye from sunlight and keeps flies away from the eye. This should decrease spread of the disease in the herd and increase animal comfort and therefore grazing activity.

## How is it prevented?

Preventive measures are also very important in either keeping pinkeye outbreaks from occurring or in minimizing the impacts when they do. Providing both shade and adequate nutrition are important for overall health of cattle but also help minimize pinkeye outbreaks. Keeping pas-

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tures clipped, especially once seed heads start to appear, as well as controlling dust will also help.

In many cases, the biggest culprit in pinkeye outbreaks is face flies. They are also the hardest to control. Face flies irritate eyes, which leads to excessive tearing that attracts more flies. They then pick up the causative agent and transfer it to other animals. In comparison to horn flies, face flies actually spend very little time

on one animal but go from animal to animal. Getting aggressive in controlling all flies, but particularly face flies, is a must in prevention and control of outbreaks. Several options for fly control include fly tags, pour-ons, sprays, dust bags and back rubbers. For more information on flies and fly control go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB6CIVzzWIM>.

Both commercial and autogenous vaccines are available for pinkeye control. The nature of

*Moraxella bovis* and the other bacteria involved in causing pinkeye make development of a highly effective vaccine difficult. This leads to variable results from ranch to ranch. They are rarely effective in preventing outbreaks alone, but may decrease number and severity of cases in some herds. The herd veterinarian can help with decisions about pinkeye vaccine protocols and the cost effectiveness of pinkeye vaccination. 🐾

## Dean Lee Research Station virtual field tour set for July 20

ALEXANDRIA — The 2020 Dean Lee Research and Extension Center virtual field tour will be on the internet starting at 8:30 a.m. on July 20. “Our scientists’ research at Dean Lee has continued during the pandemic,” said Daniel Stephenson, Dean Lee resident coordinator. “We want to provide the public with an update on their work and our programs, and give producers and other clientele helpful information to support field crops and beef cattle operations on-farm.”

Tara Smith, LSU AgCenter Central Region director, said the decision to use an online format was made out of caution given the current COVID-19 situation. “Presentations will be pre-recorded and available for viewing on a YouTube channel and on our Dean Lee Research Station website on the day of the event. And they will be available for later access,” she said.

“Upon viewing the videos, questions can be sent to the presenters by phone or email,” Smith said.

The addresses for viewing the field day are <https://bit.ly/DeanLeeYouTube> and <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/deanleefieldday>.

Beef cattle topics will include body condition scoring, breeding soundness exams, hay meadow management and weaning techniques.

Field crop presentations will include research updates on herbicide use and weed management, insect management, soybean and cotton development stages, disease management in field crops and fertilizer rates determined by a Greenseeker device.

Presentations on horticulture will include updates on established demonstration beds at Dean Lee, including a native plant bed and a Louisiana Super Plant bed. The videos will feature shade trees and potential tree problems. 🐾



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# Finding local blueberries during the pandemic

BATON ROUGE — Blueberry growers are hoping to avoid the drastically reduced sales that some other farms have experienced because of lost markets as a result of the coronavirus.

With limited movement, it may be hard to find local berries in stores, but there are ways to get the produce that you want and stay safe in the process.

LSU AgCenter agent Mary Helen Ferguson said farmers market operations are altered, school lunchrooms are closed and restaurants have not been able to offer dine-in service.

“At the same time, we still have to — and want to — eat,” she said. I want to make sure that you are aware of ways to find locally grown fruits and vegetables.”

Many people already know of local growers, roadside stands or grocery stores where they normally buy local produce. There are also websites that can help you find it.

The AgCenter and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry have recently partnered to put together a map of local producers.

This service is available under the “LA Farm Food Map and Directory” tab on LDAF’s Coronavirus Information Center website [www.ldaf.state.la.us/covid-19/](http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/covid-19/). Growers who have not yet submitted their request to be listed on that site can go there to do so as well.

“Because that site has been just recently put together, only a few of our growers have listed themselves so far,” Ferguson said. “There are also

other sites where you can find out who offers local produce.”

The Louisiana MarketMaker site, [la.foodmarketmaker.com](http://la.foodmarketmaker.com), allows you to search for a particular product in a specific area.



LocalHarvest at [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) provides information in a similar way as the MarketMaker site, but not as many local operations are listed on this site, she said.

Growers who are part of the LDAF Louisiana Grown program can be found online at [www.louisianagrown.com](http://www.louisianagrown.com) under the “Where to Buy” tab. There, choose among “Fruit & Veggie Producers,” “Horticultural,” “Sod Producers” and “Farmers Market.” Businesses are listed by parish.

People particularly interested in a pick-your-own experience can go to [PickYourOwn.org](http://PickYourOwn.org) to find information about u-pick farms.

First, select Louisiana, either from the list of states or on the map. Note that there seems to be a glitch with the map. To find farms in Washington or Tangipahoa parishes, for example, click on St. Tammany Parish (or another parish in the New Orleans area) or choose “New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana” from the list.

Just clicking on Washington or Tangipahoa on the map does not lead to the farm listings for these parishes, even though farms from both are listed on the website. “If you’re thinking of visiting a u-pick farm, please contact them first to make sure they will be open when you plan to go,” Ferguson said.

AgCenter food safety specialist Achyut Adhikari said the nature of pick-your-own farm operations allows customers to go out in the field and harvest their own produce, which necessitates the importance of following best safety practices against COVID-19 at these operations.

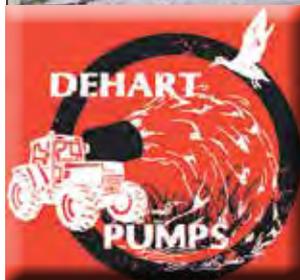
“While at the farm, consumers should follow best management practices, which include maintaining a social distance of 6 feet from one another, wearing face coverings if required and following proper hygiene,” Adhikari said.

Growers should inform their customers that they will have hand-washing stations and hand sanitizer available at the facility entrance, he said.

Ferguson said local growers have already had Southern highbush blueberries available, and the more standard rabbiteye blueberries are starting to come in. 

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# Mosquito season brings threat of Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus



**Dr. Mike Strain**  
Commissioner of  
Agriculture and  
Forestry

BATON ROUGE - Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., is urging horse owners to vaccinate their animals for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV).

“Between the heat and recent wet weather from Tropical Storm Cristobal, the conditions are perfect for mosquitoes,” said Strain. “Horses are infected the same way humans are infected – by being bit-

ten by infected mosquitoes - so everyone needs to take extra precautionary measures at this time.”

At this time, there is one WNV case reported in a horse in St. Tammany Parish. If a mosquito bites an infected bird, EEE or WNV can be spread to horses, dogs, cats and humans. These mosquito-transmitted

diseases can cause inflammation or swelling of the brain and spinal cord.

Clinical signs can include: fever, loss of appetite, weakness and loss of coordination. The disease can often result in death.

EEE primarily causes disease in the equine species such as horses, mules, donkeys and zebras. However, a number of other animals such as pigs, llamas, bats, reptiles, amphibians, and rodents can also be infected.

WNV primarily affects birds, but can also infect bats, horses, cats, dogs, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels, domestic rabbits, alligators and humans.

Prevention includes removing standing water where mosquitoes breed and using mosquito repellents that are safe for animals and humans. Horses can also be vaccinated. So far, there is no vaccination approved for people. Horse owners should contact their

local veterinarian regarding proper vaccination protocols during this time of increased risk.

Veterinarians are required to call the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry if they suspect EEE or WNV in a horse as they are reportable diseases. **A**

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**Craig A. McCain**  
FSA State  
Executive Director

We are hopeful that both you and your family remain safe during these difficult days. As you are aware, our State is currently in Phase 2 of the Reopening of America process outlined by the White House. Please know that FSA is working toward increasing the staff available in the offices to increase our ability to serve

your needs. Some offices have met the criteria for increasing staff, others have not. However, regardless of our current operating status, Farm Program and Farm Loan staff are available to meet your needs. Please contact your local County Office for assistance.

Speaking of assistance, there is a way that you can assist us as we strive to serve you. Currently

County Offices are in the midst of delivering the CFAP program, which was authorized by the CARES Act as a response to economic losses associated with the COVID pandemic. While CFAP is certainly a very high priority, these same County Offices also have work remaining to complete in 2020 ARCPLC, WHIP+, CRP and acreage reporting. As you know, this is a significant lift. You can assist us by working through any difficulties in the communication processes and by becoming familiar with program requirements and submitting applications, or other required documents in a timely manner. Your local office will work with you to identify the best method of interaction for you, as I cannot accurately predict when all offices will return to business as usual. Therefore, the challenge faced by FSA and yourself, is how do we work together to serve your needs now, even in the current posture. There is no doubt in my mind that working together, we can be successful. For more information about CFAP or other COVID related assistance, or any of the programs or loans offered by FSA, you may contact your local FSA Office or go to [www.Farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://www.Farmers.gov/coronavirus).

[www.Farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://www.Farmers.gov/coronavirus).

As always, thank you for all that you do each day to serve our Nation and the World!!!

## Farmers and Ranchers in Louisiana Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

*Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers*

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through **August 28, 2020**. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance

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**WHEN:** July 8, 2020

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# HorizonAg



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USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

### Important Dates to remember

- **June 15** COC nomination period begins
- **June 30** is the last day to sign up for 2020 ARCPLC
- **July 3** USDA Service Centers will be closed in observance of Independence Day
- **July 15** is the final acreage reporting date for most seeded spring crops
- **Aug. 1** is the final date to request a reconstitution-combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on farming operation
- **Aug. 1** COC nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the County Office; *Since Aug. 1 falls on a weekend this year, nomination forms will be accepted through Aug. 3, 2020*
- **Aug. 28** is the last day to apply for CFAP
- **Ongoing into 2020** is the signup period for WHIP+ 

# Livestock theft in Avoyelles Parish

BATON ROUGE – Today, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Brand Commission arrested a Rapides Parish man accused of stealing four head of cattle and one horse from a public livestock barn in Avoyelles Parish.

According to investigators, 48 year old Joel Dunn, 125 Town & Country Road, Alexandria, La., allegedly purchased the five head of livestock on October 2 and October

9 of 2019, and left the market without making proper payment.

Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., said, “State law protects our livestock markets from persons not complying with proper payment for livestock. When the suspect did not return the livestock he did not pay for, it became a crime. As always, our brand investigators take these criminal acts seriously.”

The stolen livestock is valued at approximately \$2,000. At this time, the livestock have not been recovered.

Dunn is charged with two counts of theft of livestock for each date in which the crimes were allegedly committed. Dunn was located and booked in Vermilion Parish. He was then transported by Brand Commission inspectors to Avoyelles Parish where he was also booked.

The Livestock Brand Commission was assisted in this investigation by the Abbeville

Police Department and the Vermilion Parish Sheriff’s Department. 🐾

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# Finally! Maybe?



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need to “tell their story”. Well, the present conditions are perfect for telling your story and FINALLY the consumers may be listening.

When the President of the United States has a news briefing and invites farmers and ranchers in to share their story people listen. So, we have to take a deep breath, not say “I told you so, and continue to do our job, feeding the people of the U.S. and parts of the world. This year when people read how farmers and ranchers got 19 billion dollars to assist them, there will not be a cry about how they are getting subsidies.

Continue to do your job, hold your head high and to tell your story. The cattle market is



broken! Pretty rash statement you say! Well, when the beef packer was making north of \$2000.00 per head and live cattle coming out of the feedlot in April and May were losing \$400.00 per head, I would say yes, the market is broken. As cattle in the feedlots were backing up because packers had to reduce their slaughter capacity due to less workers available, coupled with “spreading people out (social distancing)” feedlots were not able to find room for graze-out wheat and ryegrass cattle and as a

result lower feeder cattle prices.

We are now in June, neighbors to our North will be wanting our good Louisiana calves to go to summer grass. August and September are months that backgrounders are in the market for calves to go to wheat and ryegrass. Keep posted on the market with your marketing rep and if you can, be flexible with your marketing plan. Remember, we can grow forages in Louisiana which will allow you to stretch your marketing window. These beef packers have the ability to process large numbers of cattle and technically we can get through this backlog of market-ready cattle relatively quickly, if the packers want to. Demand for beef will be good through Labor Day and with restaurants opening up and people wanting beef, things could be good. Bask in the light that less than 2% of the U.S. population is in production agriculture and the other 98% are becoming aware how important farmers and ranchers are to the sustainability of this great nation!

Enjoy Father’s Day and feed him a big steak!! Contact CPL at 888-528-6999 or [lacattle.org](http://lacattle.org).



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# LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station virtual field tour set

ST. GABRIEL — The 2020 field day at the LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station will be a statewide event held online only because of the challenges caused by the ongoing pandemic.

Internet presentations by sugarcane researchers and invited guests will be available for viewing starting July 15 at [www.LSUAgCenter.com/sugarcane-fieldday](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com/sugarcane-fieldday). Viewers will be able to watch the presentations later on YouTube.

“We intend to welcome everyone to the field day as usual, and then our scientists will make their presentations just as they have in the past,” said Jeff Hoy, Sugar Research Station resident coordinator.

“The virtual field day will allow the presenters to include images and graphics in their talks that will add to the content, and by going virtual, we hope to acquaint a larger, broader audience with the important work going on at the Sugar Research Station,” he said.

This will probably be the only sugarcane field day in Louisiana for the 2020 season, Hoy said.

The field tour will include talks on the latest research related to variety development, weeds, insects, diseases and agronomic practices. In addition, a virtual field day will allow inclusion of a presentation by Niranjana Baisakh on his lab-based program for molecular genetics and breeding.

Poster presentations also will be available in PowerPoint.

The event will wrap up with talks by Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture; Mike Salassi, AgCenter associate vice president for plant and animal sciences; Jim Simon, general manager for the American Sugar Cane League; and Mike Strain, commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. 

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# Preparations, precautions important for safely raising backyard chickens

BATON ROUGE – With extra time at home, many people have begun raising chickens for the first time, while others are considering this rapidly burgeoning hobby. For those contemplating backyard chickens, it's important to consider the materials you will need and how to keep both poultry and people healthy and safe.

During spring, you can purchase chicks — typically two to three days old — at many feed and seed stores. They're also available through mail order from hatcheries.

"If you're looking for a good egg-producing bird, go for the heavy breeds — like an Australorp, a Buff Orpington or a Barred Rock," said Anna Timmerman, LSU AgCenter extension agent in Greater New Orleans. "Chickens also come in bantam size, too, which is a miniature. But if you're looking for a good egg-producing bird, go for the heavier breeds."

Before bringing baby chicks home, you need to set up a brooder area.

"You want good bedding material like pine wood chips in the bottom of the brooder so they don't slip and go lame," Timmerman said. "You also want to get chick-sized feeders and waterers."

Additionally, young birds will need a sack of special chick starter feed, which has more protein than other feeds, grit for grinding their food and a fire-safe ceramic heat lamp that should be set to about 95 degrees.

"If your chicks are bunched up underneath the heat source, it's too cold. And if they're all out towards the edges, it's too hot," said Timmerman, who grew up raising poultry as part of a 4-H project. "If they're all over the place

in the brooder, then it's just right."

"In about six weeks, they'll look like full-grown birds," she said.

Susceptibility to extreme temperatures is not the only vulnerability for a chick or a full-grown chicken. Predators like foxes and coyotes are a constant threat, and the best way to prevent harm to your birds is by building a sturdy house that prevents multiple entry points.

"Most people think chicken wire is what you're supposed to use for your building, but the gaps are big enough for predators to stick their paws through or rip it open and get your chickens. So you should use something sturdier with less openings," said Matt Faust, a Baton Rouge resident who has been raising chickens for 10 years.

"It's also important to sink concrete blocks under the structure to prevent predators from digging underneath the cages to get in," he said.

"There are pre-fab chicken house kits you can easily put together that have two levels and a good roof," Timmerman said. "You need protection from the rain and the elements, and the cage needs to be sturdy to keep them safe from predators."

"As far as the health of the birds, keeping the cage dry and clean is about the best thing you can do," Faust said. "If you don't have a good roof on your cage and water is getting in all the time, it will become a slop hole of bacteria." Two of the most common chicken diseases that can spread from bird to bird and even destroy a flock are avian influenza and virulent Newcastle disease. Even though proper sanitation goes a long way in preventing disease, you can do something else first.

"The National Poultry Improvement Program certifies qualified poultry breeders to have chicks, hatching eggs or mature stock that are free of disease," Timmerman said. "If you buy these NPIP birds, you'll know they've already been vaccinated against diseases."

People are also at risk of getting diseases like salmonella from handling poultry if they don't use proper sanitation.

"You always want to wash your hands after handling your birds. And don't kiss them or touch your face to them," Timmerman said.

The United States Department of Agriculture recommends these safe cleaning tips for poultry:

- Regularly remove used litter, manure and other debris.
- Remove chickens from houses when "wet" cleaning all surfaces. Work from top to bottom and back to front. Rinse carefully with water.
- Apply disinfectant according to label directions. Use disinfectants that the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency indicates are effective against avian influenza and other poultry diseases.
- Leave the enclosure empty until it is completely dry. Wet surfaces can be harmful to poultry.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after you leave the poultry area.

"People might think chickens are noisy and stinky, but as long as you do it properly, they're not," Faust said. "Chickens offer a lot of practical benefits. And because they're really affectionate little animals, they make surprisingly good pets." 🐔



Because they're really affectionate animals, chickens can make surprisingly good pets. Raising poultry can be a productive part of family life, providing a source of eggs and encouraging children's responsibility for raising them as pets. Photo by Randy LaBauve/LSU AgCenter

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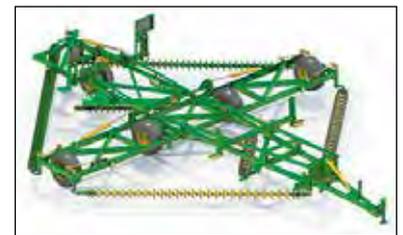
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## A heaven-sent high tunnel



**Chad Kacir**  
State Conservationist  
for NRCS

Let's play a game... name that Louisiana town! This hometown is a place where neighbors are like family, where most folks have either gone to school or church with your mom, dad or first cousin. It is also a place where you

barter home-grown tomatoes in exchange for your next door neighbor's tractor (at least for a couple of hours.) Tucked into the southwest portion of our state, on the edge of what is known as the Cajun prairie, is Kinder, Louisiana in Jefferson Davis

Parish. Seeped in history and culture, Kinder is also home to EJ and Nancy McCann.

EJ and Nancy have been married for 42 years and spent most of it right here on their property in Kinder. Over the years, they built their own home, raised a family, started a pick your own blueberry farm and currently have a state-of-the-art blacksmith shop. In fact, EJ is known far and wide as someone who can create, fix, or build just about anything you can imagine.

For the McCann's growing a garden is in their DNA. EJ grew up watching his dad cultivate an expansive garden,



EJ McCann and Erin Hamilton, Acting District Conservationist with high tunnel in background.

"Even though we grew up in the city, my dad always had a big garden next to us," recalled EJ.

Over the years, EJ and Nancy grew their own gardens, always experimenting and searching for the most effective and innovative way to grow produce. "Every year we would have this beautiful garden, we would do well for a while, then bad weather would hit, or we would have two weeks of rain and we would lose everything," explained EJ.

Fast forward to 2019 when the McCann's visited a family member with a high tunnel and witnessed first-hand the amazing results of growing in a seasonal high tunnel. "That is what inspired me to get one," smiled EJ. Knowing only that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had a program that offered technical and financial assistance for establishing a high tunnel, EJ made a trip to the Jefferson Davis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and NRCS office in Jennings and met with the District Conservationist at that time, Mary Beth Guillory. (Mary Beth Guillory is currently the District Conservationist in Ville Platte, LA.)

"I didn't really know much about the process of applying for a high tunnel," explained EJ. "Mary Beth and Erin Hamilton, Jennings



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Acting District Conservationist, worked with me, provided guidance, explained what I needed to do, and really helped me through the process.” EJ continues, “I tell everybody I know about NRCS, the programs available and the benefits of having a high tunnel.” Once the McCann’s were approved, the high tunnel was installed in June last year.

EJ wasted no time, he worked in the soil, fertilized, utilized compost and planted his garden from seed. The fruits of his labor were evident when the McCann’s picked over 300 bell peppers in December, just six months after the high tunnel was built. One of the greatest benefits of the high tunnel is that it protects plants from hard rains and extreme weather, that previously destroyed their gardens.

EJ spends on average about three hours a day working in his tunnel, he an avid reader and researcher, and is continually experimenting. So, it is no wonder EJ and Nancy have one of the most productive high tunnels around, filled to the brim with sky-high tomato plants heavy with fruit, squash, bell peppers and cucumbers.

“I’ve learned so much from Erin and the folks with NRCS and the Jefferson Davis SWCD. I also utilize Facebook and YouTube groups dedicated for high tunnel growers,” said EJ. Keeping a journal is invaluable for EJ, he keeps notes on what has worked well, and what hasn’t.

The McCann’s are quick to share their past gardening experience and knowledge with others. When friends and neighbors hear about the McCann’s high tunnel, they are curious and want to stop by to look for themselves. In fact, one of the McCann’s neighbors has already reached out to the Jennings NRCS Field Office. Erin Hamilton beams, “I’m glad we are helping people, the word spreads fast, when you have such a successful high tunnel, like the McCann’s.” In fact, one of Mr. EJ’s neighbors called our office, I’m going to visit her property and discuss the idea of a high tunnel with her.”

What does the future hold for the McCann’s? “Soil health is extremely important to me, so I want to continue to enrich the soil in my current high tunnel,” explained EJ. “My next goal is to hopefully install another high tunnel and plant what I consider traditional crops like corn, okra, and field peas.”

“Through the Environmental

Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) landowners have the opportunity to apply for high tunnels,” explained Erin. High tunnels are an excellent way to protect crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall and extreme cold weather and ultimately they extend the growing season.” Erin continues, “High tunnels are energy efficient and help reduce the use of pesticides, too.”

Most days you can find EJ working in the tunnel, weeding and tending the robust plants inside. Even though the high tunnel requires dedication

and hard work, EJ is happiest when he is tending his garden. “It gives me a sense of being self-reliant, especially right now, it is something I can do. It gives me a profound sense of satisfaction providing for my family and friends. “I’m an outside kind of guy and I enjoy helping people, so being able to grow food and share with others is a little bit of heaven to me.”

For more information about the technical and financial assistance NRCS provides, visit your local office. 



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# On the Farm: Cattleman Paul LaFleur



Story and photos by Bruce Schultz

GRAND PRAIRIE – Paul LaFleur’s cattle operation is based on the land in St. Landry Parish where his grandfather farmed.

Paul has named his place, Hosea’s Cattle Farm, after his grandfather, Hosea LaFleur.

Paul started raising cattle in 1995. After years of growing sweet potatoes, cutting grass on the interstate and working for a nursery company, he decided to get in the cattle business. “When I started out, I didn’t even have a tractor.”

Paul credits the late Ray Fontenot and his son, Tony, for teaching him things along the way. “They helped me a lot.”

He said he learned much of what he knows about farming from his grandfather. “He never had a tractor. He farmed with horses and mules. He milked a cow until he was 76.”

Paul was 8 years old when his father died, and he lived with his grandparents starting at 13.

When he started his cattle enterprise, he gradually increased his herd. “I kept adding to it, what I could afford.” He started small with 5 cows. Then he borrowed money to buy 50 cows. When he paid off that loan, he bought 100 cows and the herd grew from there.

Paul said the biggest mistake cattle owners make is violating that old rule of buying low and selling high.

He said he’s watched novices pay as much as \$3,500 for a cow-and its calf. “A real cattle producer knows you can’t make money at that.”

And then they compound their problems by buying new equipment, he said.

For Paul, persistence is essential. “You have to stay with it in the good times and the bad times.”

The past 3 months have not been a good time for the cattle business. The pandemic has caused meat processing plants to close because of virus outbreaks. That has led to a shortage on grocery store shelves in some areas. But cattle prices are down while retail prices are up considerably. Added to all of that is the decreased beef demand with restaurant closings.

“This caused cattle slaughter to fall significantly, seeing slaughter numbers in late April that were 35 percent below the previous year,” said Dr. Kurt Guidry, LSU AgCenter ag economist. “This, in turn, caused large reductions in beef production which also fell by 34 percent from the previous year in late April.”

He said fed cattle prices, which began 2020 in the \$120 to \$125 per hun-

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dredweight range, fell below \$100 in April. Calf prices across the United States that started the year at \$160 to \$170 per hundredweight fell to \$140 by April.

But he said cattle slaughter and beef production have begun to rebound and become more normalized and the market has responded.

Guidry said prices will improve, but it will take a while for the backlog of slaughter-ready calves to move through the market.

He said calf prices in Louisiana have improved marginally with the latest prices reported for 500- to 600-pound steers ranging from \$85 to \$154 per hundredweight. "While we could see a small improvement from these levels, it is unlikely that we see significant improvement until sometime later this fall or into next year."

Paul has a group of calves that he would have sold already if the pandemic hadn't occurred. "I'll hold on to them until the market gets better." Of course, that means he'll have to castrate them and invest in vaccinations.

"It's a gamble. I knew if I sold them, I would have lost a lot of money."

He vaccinates for pink eye, and he uses ear tags for flies, as recommended by his veterinarian, Dr. Craig Fontenot from Evangeline Parish. "We use a different chemical every year. Whatever he tells me."

He said he has a few individuals who buy single calves from him for butchering. That usually works well, but this year is different. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, lots of people have bought calves for their own beef supply and that means the custom slaughterhouses are considerably behind. Paul said the area slaughterhouse he uses is booked until October.

But Paul sells most of his cattle in a group. He said he has used video sales, but he finds he comes out ahead selling to one buyer who gives him a better overall deal.

Paul likes a Brahma bull on a Hereford cow to produce the highly desired F1 Tiger Stripe calves.



Cows and their calves graze in a pasture on Paul LaFleur's farm in the Grand Prairie community.

But a Brangus bull on an Angus cow makes a highly desirable calf, he said.

He segregates his cows by color and keeps them in separate pastures.

He doesn't cut corners on bulls either. Paul relies on the famed J.D. Hudgins Brahma bulls from Hungerford, Texas. The Hudgins ranch has been in operation for more than 100 years.

For Brangus bulls, he relies on GENETRUST based in Lamar, Missouri. And for Angus bulls, he goes to Earl Lemoine in Moreauville.

One thing he is particular about is bulls with the genetics of producing low-birth weight calves so he doesn't have to get up in the middle of the night to pull calves.

His calving season from January through March.

Bulls are put on cows for 3 months, starting in March. He tries to keep 25 cows per bull.



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SEE LAFLEUR, PAGE 22

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Paul also works at the Dominique's Livestock Market every Tuesday, using a horse to move cattle from pens to the auction block. Occasionally he'll see a good cow to add to his herd.

Paul said he's gotten to the point that he's ready to sell replacement heifers. "I never could sell them before because I needed them."

Paul also sells hay. He figured out early that if he was going to be in the cattle business, he would have to be in the hay business to provide his cattle and to sell. "If I had to buy my own hay, there's no way I'd make it."

He rents adjacent land for hay production and grazing, and he has cows on pastureland near Prairie Ronde.

His hay operation produces about 5,000 round bales a year. To handle that kind of volume, he just bought a new cutter, a 17-foot GMD5251, that conveniently folds up for traveling down the road.

He has two hay trailers to carry 11 round bales without stacking them.

His favorite hay is bermudagrass, and he uses Alicia, Jiggs and Russell. Pasture planted in those hybrids have to be maintained with fertilizer and herbicides.

Paul said his most problematic weeds are johnsongrass, carpetgrass and especially vaseygrass.

Feral pigs damage his pastures in some areas. He has a friend who hunts the hogs and that helps control but not eliminate them.

He also has meadows of bahiagrass that doesn't need fertilizer or herbicide, so maybe in the long run it's more cost effective.

(Paul recalled during his days of cutting grass on the interstate, they actually harvested hay from the right-of-way along I-49. In addition to the problem of trash and debris in the grass, loading the hay next to a highway was a challenge, he said, so it wasn't as practical as it might seem.)

His cattle have continuous access to hay. They also are given feed every morning. He buys the feed, containing corn, soybeans and cottonseed meal, from a feed mill in Mansura.

Calves have constant feed available to them in the pastures. The feed trailers are enclosed with fencing that allows entry for calves only.

Paul and his wife, Amy, have been married for 25 years. She works for the St. Landry Parish School Board. They have a daughter, Taylor, who is attending LSU to become a project manager, and two sons, Joshua who works offshore and Jordan who's in the tree-cutting business.



A Brahman bull with a cow and its calf. LaFleur buys Brahman bulls from the J.D. Hudgins in Texas.

Paul and Amy have three grandchildren. "I've got one grandson (Jackson) who might take over the cattle."

Paul figures even when he's retired, he'll still have a small herd of cattle.

He is a graduate of the Louisiana Master Cattleman Program. He praised the program for providing a wide range of information for anyone who raises cattle, regardless of their experience level.

"You don't ever know everything," he said, stopping to pick up a buttercup weed and



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explaining how he learned to control that plant from the Master Cattleman Program.

Paul didn't volunteer the information, but his wife reminded him that he was named Louisiana Cattleman of the Year in 2006, and St. Landry Parish Cattleman of the Year in 2015.

Vince Deshotel, LSU AgCenter regional beef cattle specialist, said Paul has prospered because he keeps his overhead expenses low, and he takes a conservative approach. "He grew his operation from the ground up."

He said Paul's emphasis on good genetics has been an investment that's paid off in the long run.

"He's got a pretty good hay business," Deshotel said. "He trades out equipment frequently so he doesn't have a lot of down time."

And he said Amy's help at accounting lets Paul concentrate his efforts in the field.

Deshotel said cattle producers in general have a better outlook. Recent warm weather has boosted forage growth. "People are getting some hay cut."

And he said the cattle industry is showing signs of improvement. "The market seems to be somewhat better, far better than in April when it bot-tomed out." A

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# Crawfish season winding down; time to restock ponds

With crawfish season winding down, an LSU AgCenter crawfish specialist has written guidelines for stocking new ponds.

"Now and the next few weeks would be a good time to stock ponds," said Mark Shirley, also a Louisiana Sea Grant agent. "Most of the rice crop is tall and dense enough for crawfish to hide under."

But he said that in most cases, adding stock to an existing pond is not necessary. If the pond had mostly small peeler crawfish this season, adding additional stock will only make overcrowding worse and result in further stunting.

He said crawfish for stocking should have a 50-50 ratio of females to males.

In addition, he recommended avoiding white river crawfish and using only red swamp crawfish. He said buyers usually don't want the white river species because of its appearance.

"As always, care should be taken to minimize stress during handling by keeping crawfish wet, in the shade, and not too hot or too cold, and do



Now and the next few weeks would be a good time to restock crawfish ponds.

not use crawfish that have been stored in a cooler overnight," Shirley said.

Crawfish used for stocking should be healthy, and Shirley advised producers to inspect fields where replacement crawfish are caught to make sure there are no dead or sickly crawfish that could indicate a problem with the devastating white spot syndrome virus (WSSV).

Shirley emphasized that humans are not affected by WSSV.

"This is a type of virus that affects only crustaceans," he said.

It's possible that WSSV can be found in surface water, he said, and it could be moved to other fields if affected water is redistributed. But he said it is not present in fresh well water.

He advised that traps, boats and other equipment used in ponds where WSSV is suspected should be pressure washed to remove debris and mud and allowed to dry in the sun for a week before moving the equipment from farm to farm or even to other ponds.

"Traps can simply be cleaned of mud and debris and then dried thoroughly in the sun," he said. "Alternately, boats and traps can be power washed and then sprayed or scrubbed with a 5% bleach solution."

Not much is known about WSSV. Shirley said the LSU AgCenter has obtained a grant to study the virus. The research was slated to start this year, but the ongoing coronavirus pandemic interfered with that plan.

"We do plan to pick up those efforts in the fall when the ponds are flooded," he said.

The research will include a study of the virus' genetics to determine if there have been any changes since the disease first hit Louisiana in 2007.

"That may be the reason why some fields are affected more than others," he said, adding that it's possible that some crawfish have developed immunity.

The research team is trying to determine how the virus gets into a pond in the first place. It could be spread by birds or insects or possibly brought in with the fish used as bait.

The virus, which was first detected in Asian shrimp farms, causes a white spot about the size of a pencil eraser on shrimp shells. That white spot is not found on the thicker shells of crawfish affected by the virus.

There is no solution for a pond once the virus is found.

Shirley said the first sign of the disease in a crawfish pond is a sudden decrease in production.

"Usually it's a pretty drastic drop in the catch," he said.

Large, dead crawfish will be found floating, which is not normal after a crawfish dies, he said.

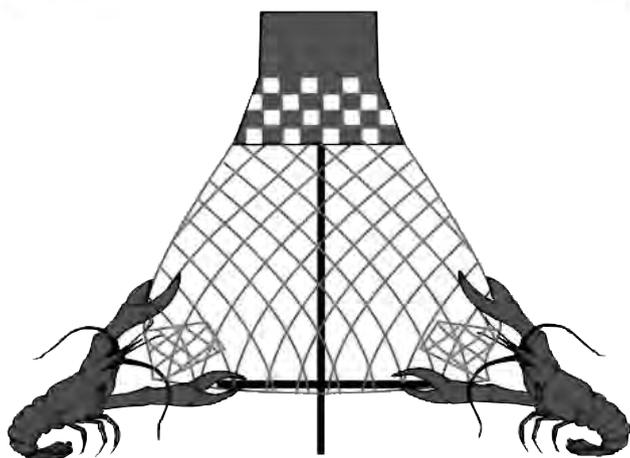
"We're still trying to figure out the mechanism of why they float," he said.

Smaller crawfish often survive WSSV outbreaks, allowing producers to continue fishing.

Shirley said only about 20% of the ponds in south Louisiana are still in production. Decreased demand by restaurants caused many producers to drain ponds to plant rice, Shirley said. Now he said the catch from the Atchafalaya Basin is increasing. 

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# Striving for some clarity amid muddy waters

By **Charlie Stutesman**  
**Marketing Consultant**

My wife and I moved to a lake somewhat recently, into the house she grew up in, and she happens to be on the association board. One of her responsibilities is learning some of the measures to keep the lake clean—a starting point being simply to measure how clear the water is. Recently I rode along as she made her rounds. One tool to measure the water is a Secchi disk which we happened to learn to use, not all that difficult, mind you, but over time, it is valuable and important to measure. Measurements show the water is clearer than it has been in quite some time. Anecdotally, this may be from a lack of use due to the shutdown.

While discussing that, our conversation expanded to talk of better water in many places throughout the world. There's also better air quality, with images of being able to see the Arc de Triomphe, the clearing of pollution in China, India, and other places around the world. One could argue that even in very difficult times, big, good things can happen—although nobody would wish for the cause of all this, including the sick and lost family, and the ongoing risk.

An issue all of this has raised is how global we really are on more fronts, and to a greater degree, than many of us may have realized—from air quality, to food, to health care, to drugs, to travel, to demand, to communication, to politics. All of us in agriculture have known how global the ag market has been for some time. But are these interrelationships even deeper? One realization from this period is that so

many factors, not directly related, can quickly affect agricultural demand and the processing and distribution infrastructure in a shocking way. These factors can add to or exaggerate the factors we already know.

Testing water clarity and considering all the major events got me thinking that it would be nice to have a little more clarity on the agricultural challenges we are facing. Are we at a point where we are reconsidering how global we really are, and if it is such a great thing? Are we at a tipping point that hopefully will lead to better markets and decisions? Should we be looking at better ways of managing our domestic processing and distribution?

As we ask these questions, we realize there are several economic principles that make change difficult, particularly from an “efficiency” standpoint. We have been moving to bigger farms, bigger processors and fewer outlets for products. There's larger equipment and chemical consolidation and on and on, which can be economically justified. What has taken place can be roughly described as simply market efficiency, i.e. lowest cost focus in many cases. In many cases, it has meant overseas production.

But where does it lead, what is the end game and is it as good as it can and should be? Do we need a reset of some decisions to bring market dynamics to a more manageable level given the potential “shocks” to the system? Are we too dependent on a few large processors owned elsewhere? Should we have more local processing and production? Should we have alternate processing and delivery avenues for unused meat, milk and produce, let alone all the other areas

mentioned above? Should we have more local production of necessary inputs—drugs, for example? There are more questions needing to be asked.

It was a shame to see all the destruction of animals, milk, etc. when there was and is so much need. Having said that, individual producer association groups did step up and found ways to process and ship milk, cheese, produce, and other products to areas of need. But there was a lot more needing to be done.

In some cases, the cause of problems we have recently seen in ag are simply just poor decisions. The last three years have seen some very poor policy decisions, in my humble opinion, from an agricultural perspective. One example is that the EPA went on a waiver granting party for the Renewable Fuel Standard, granting 85 out of 97 “hardship” waivers requested by refiners in three years, taking a billion bushels of corn demand with it and creating significant uncertainty about the future of the ethanol industry. Did we need to do that?

In 2020, we should not have to be asking these questions! Much of what was in place has been dismantled, downsized or discarded over the last few years and longer in some cases. In the age of rapid and easy communication, we should figure out how to better manage our resources, production and our demand for that production, both nationally and globally.

As with the world at large, in agriculture there seem to be some muddy waters. Hopefully, we find some clarity shortly. 

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# Pre-tassel nitrogen application for Louisiana corn in 2020

*Dr. Rasel Parvej, LSU AgCenter Soil Fertility Specialist; Dr. Dan Fromme, LSU AgCenter Corn Specialist; Josh Copes, LSU AgCenter Weed Scientist; and Syam Dodla, LSU AgCenter Soil Scientist*

Nitrogen is the most yield limiting nutrient for corn production. Corn requires nitrogen for amino acids, protein, and chlorophyll production. Chlorophyll is the key component for photosynthesis. Insufficient chlorophyll content results in reduced yield potential. A 200-bushel corn crop requires about 200 to 240 pounds nitrogen per acre i.e. roughly 1 to 1.2 pounds nitrogen per bushel corn harvested. Applying all the nitrogen at or before planting are prone to loss to the environment through volatilization, denitrification, and/or leaching. Volatilization loss is high in hot and humid climates such as Louisiana and alkaline soils if the fertilizer (especially urea) is not incorporated within a few days. Leaching loss is high in high rainfall areas especially in sandy to sandy loam soils with low cation exchange capacity



Figure 1. Nitrogen deficient corn in saturated soils due to excessive rainfall. (Source: Pioneer - Nitrogen Application Timing)

(CEC). Denitrification loss is the main concern in poorly drained soils but can occur in any soils with excessive rainfall that creates water-logged anaerobic conditions. Like this year, excessive rainfall often occurs in lower Mississippi Delta during the early corn growing season resulting in saturated soils for several days and accelerates nitrogen loss via denitrifica-

tion. Therefore, nitrogen management in corn is one of the biggest concerns for producers every year. It is recommended to apply nitrogen in at least two splits during the growing season with 1/3 at planting and 2/3 around V5-V6 stage (5-6 leaves with visible collars and plant is about 12-inch tall). Providing adequate nitrogen near V5-V6 stage is very important because corn initiates ear shoots and tassel and sets yield components at or little after V6 stage.

Although most of the research shows that two applications are good enough to maximize corn yield under ideal conditions for most soils with medium to high CEC (>10), nitrogen application in three splits with 1/4 at planting, 2/4 around V5-V6 stage, and 1/4 before

tasseling could be beneficial for coarse-textured low CEC (<10) soils as well as for poorly-drained soils that are very prone to water-logged conditions. This also helps in years with excessive rainfall during the early corn growing season, which increases nitrogen losses. Including a pre-tassel application in nitrogen fertilization program can help reduce nitrogen losses

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horses and mules after returning from WWI. Lynn's son, Larry began selling horse trailers in 1967. Larry and his wife Clara, along with their family, grew the business from just horse trailers to add utility trailers, cargo trailers, gooseneck floats, cattle trailers and parts. In 1990, Larry's youngest son David took over. LeBlanc's has become known as the go-to trailer dealership for quality trailers of all types, a full line of parts and the best repair service and customizers of trailers in the south. Give us a try!

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Rayne, Louisiana in 1919, Lynn LeBlanc opened a livery stable selling

and ensure adequate nitrogen supply during the maximum nitrogen uptake period from V10 to grain-filling stage. It also helps adjust nitrogen rate based on crop growth, yield potential, environmental forecasts, crop sensing (NDVI, SPAD, etc.), and tissue testing. Many land-grant universities including LSU AgCenter trials showed that pre-tassel nitrogen application can increase corn yield when part of the pre-plant and sidedress nitrogen are lost due to excessive rainfall during early growing season (Figure 1).

Corn tissue testing is one of the important tools that guides whether pre-tassel nitrogen is required. For tissue testing, about 15-20 uppermost fully developed entire leaves below the whorl should be collected around V12-V13 stage and sent immediately to the lab for nitrogen concentration. This would allow enough time for the producer to get the results back and make a decision. The critical (normal) corn leaf nitrogen concentration around pre-tassel stage ranges from 2.75 to 3.5%. Leaf nitrogen concentration below 2.75% would be considered low and above 3.5% would be high. One caveat about



Figure 2. Corn leaf burn due to broadcasting 100 pounds nitrogen per acre as UAN. Photo courtesy: John E. Sawyer, Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, Iowa State University.

tissue testing is, it may not always accurately diagnose nitrogen deficiency and indicate pre-tassel nitrogen need because nitrogen concentration in corn leaf is highly influenced by crop growth and dilution factor. For example, leaf nitrogen concentration can be high due to insufficient plant growth (low dilution) associated with drought, diseases, and pest infestation. Therefore, care should be taken interpreting leaf

nitrogen concentration. Overall, a producer should consider rainfall amount following sidedress nitrogen application, field conditions, crop growth, yield potential, and/or tissue-testing when deciding to apply pre-tassel nitrogen.

Applying high rates of urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) as a foliar application is not recommended due to the potential for severe foliage burn (Figure 2). The pre-tassel nitrogen rate should be 15 to 25% of the total nitrogen applied i.e. roughly 40 to 60 pounds nitrogen per acre. Producer can choose dry (urea) or liquid (UAN) nitrogen source. Both dry and liquid nitrogen fertilizers can be flown by airplane; but it would be better to place nitrogen close to plant base, if possible, with high clearance applicator using “360 Y-drop” to facilitate rapid uptake, minimize nitrogen losses, and avoid foliage damage. Application

before an expected rain (about 0.25-inch) or pivot irrigation is recommended to incorporate applied nitrogen that will minimize foliage burn as well as volatilization loss. Further, multiple studies conducted at LSU AgCenter showed that use of N-stabilizers improves the efficacy of applied nitrogen fertilizer up to 20%. 



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# Strain statement on court ruling on Dicamba

Today, Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Mike Strain, D.V.M. released the following response to the U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit ruling vacating three Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registrations of the herbicide dicamba effective immediately.

“As in other states, dicamba is still available for use in Louisiana as currently labeled and will continue to be until ordered to stop. We are in contact with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the EPA in regard to the application of these crop protection products that farmers have already purchased and will need to use very soon on crops already in the ground.”

On June 3, 2020, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, Ca., vacated the EPA’s label for the use of these products.

“I agree with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue’s statement in which he said, ‘Producers need all the tools in their toolbox to produce the world’s food, fuel, and fiber.’ I further support the EPA’s science-based process for assessing and managing ecological risks, balanced against the agricultural and societal benefits of crop protection tools. Along with Secretary Perdue, I am asking the EPA to use any available flexibilities to allow the continued use of already purchased dicamba products which are a critical tool for American farmers to combat weeds resistant to many other herbicides in fields that are already planted,” said Strain.

“On behalf of the farmers in my state, I respectfully request that the EPA provide clarity on this matter and issue guidance to farmers and applicators. I am also requesting a Section 18 Emergency Exemption Use for Louisiana farmers.”

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) is designated as the lead state agency for the regulation of pesticide use and application. The LDAF is responsible for the licensing and training of pesticide applicators, overseeing worker protection, and registering pesticides for sale in the state. (A)



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# Louisiana Field Day set for July 8 near Kaplan

By Scott McClure

Rice farmers and industry representatives will have an opportunity to see and hear firsthand about the latest developments in the Provisia Rice System and new Clearfield variety CLL17, available for planting next season, at the 2020 Horizon Ag Louisiana Field Day on July 8 near Kaplan, Louisiana.

The field day, held at Richard Farms at 17720 Louisiana Highway 699, Kaplan, Louisiana, begins with a field tour at 5 p.m., guest speakers and then dinner. Dinner will be served at the Richard Farm shop located at 5632 Louisiana Highway 700, Kaplan, Louisiana.

“We’re particularly excited about the lineup we’ll be featuring at this year’s field day,” said Dr. Tim Walker, Horizon Ag general manager. “The Provisia Rice System is growing in popularity and acreage throughout the region, since Provisia herbicide is the only herbicide that will control the weedy rice complex that has become a serious threat to yields and profitability in many fields. Farmers are wanting to hear more about our current varieties PVL01 and PVL02, the Provisia System and new Provisia varieties in development.”

The event also provides Horizon Ag an opportunity to help raise awareness of the need to properly steward Provisia technology so that farmers will find it an effective tool for many years to come. A stewardship program of the Provisia Rice System, Clearfield Production System for rice and soybeans on a three-year rotation ensures sustainable management of all resistant rice types and annual grasses.

In addition to Provisia varieties, Dr. Walker said he expects field day attendees will be particularly interested in the advancement of Horizon Ag variety CLL17, an early-season, semi-dwarf, long grain Clearfield rice variety currently in registered seed production. CLL17 is from the breeding program of Dr. Adam Famoso at the LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station. It has shown strong yield potential, excellent milling yield, very good grain quality and resistance to blast.

“CLL17 offers a significant yield advantage without sacrificing the disease package,” said Dr. Walker. “We pick up blast and resistance to Cercospora but don’t give up milling. Head to head with CL151, CLL17 has improved grain length and more stable yields, particularly in a blast environment.” In 59 trials throughout the Mid-South Rice Belt beginning in 2015, CLL17 averaged 7,841 pounds per acre for the main crop. That compares to 7,155 pounds for CL111, 7,330 pounds for CL153 and 6,653 pounds for Cheniere, according to LSU AgCenter data. CLL17 has shown a similar ratoon yield potential as CL153 and CL111.

Other field day highlights include information on two newer Horizon Ag Clearfield varieties that were first available in 2020 — CLL15, a long grain rice, and CLM04, a medium grain rice, both developed by Dr. Xueyan Sha, University of Arkansas professor and rice breeder at the Rice Research and Extension Center in Stuttgart, Arkansas. Field day attendees will also get an update on CLL16, a high-yielding, long grain Clearfield rice variety developed in Dr. Karen Moldenhauer’s breeding program at the University of Arkansas Systems Division of Agriculture. CLL16 is expected to be available for commercial planting in the 2021 season.

“At Horizon Ag, we always look forward to this field day every year as a time to share exciting news and information with our customers, from our new, high-yielding varieties to updates on important rice farming technology like the Provisia System,” said Dr. Walker. “We have a lot to talk about, as we work with university and industry partners to advance the performance and profitability of rice varieties for the South this season, next year and for seasons to come. We’re expecting a good turnout and look forward to seeing everyone there.”

For more information about the Horizon Ag 2020 Louisiana Field Day, please call Horizon Ag at 866-237-6167. 📞



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# Hail damages portion of Louisiana rice crop

WELSH — Rice plants are recovering from a hailstorm last week, but yield losses are expected in some fields.

The storm hit on the night of May 26. The National Weather Service indicated hail up to 2 inches in diameter fell on a 200-square-mile area of southwest Louisiana, mostly north of Welsh and Jennings. Hail also was reported in northern Acadia Parish.

“It’s really unfortunate we have such extensive hail damage in the region,” said LSU AgCenter rice specialist Dustin Harrell. “The rice crop prior to the hail looked excellent.”

Crop consultant Blake Buller said some fields of young rice are showing signs of recovery in the week since the hailstorm. “It bounced back quite a bit,” he said.

But other fields in the area that were planted



Crop consultant Blake Buller, left, and LSU AgCenter rice specialist Dustin Harrell look at rice plants damaged by hail during a storm on May 26, 2020. Photo by Bruce Schultz/LSU AgCenter

early sustained heavier damage because the emerging panicles were badly damaged by the hail stones, Buller said.

“The most important variable we can look at is the maturity of the rice,” Harrell said.

Rice that was at the green ring to panicle dif-



A rice plant damaged by hail. Photo by Bruce Schultz/LSU AgCenter

ferentiation stage suffered extensive leaf damage, and yield losses of 10% to 15% are possible, he said.

Rice that was in the boot to heading stages will suffer the most damage because the growing point was injured, and panicles could be void of grain. “I would say the yield potential would be similar to a ratoon crop yield,” Harrell said.

Damaged leaves will also serve as a conduit for disease to enter plants.

Some fields had been recently planted before

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LSU AgCenter rice specialist Dustin Harrell examines a field of seedling rice that was damaged by hail on the night of May 26, 2020, near Welsh. Photo by Bruce Schultz/LSU AgCenter

the storm, and the seedlings were beaten down badly. Stands of conventional rice with surviving plants with fewer than 10 plants per square foot will significantly reduce yield, he said.

Adverse weather from Hurricane Barry resulted in crop damage last year on a much larger scale than the recent hail event. Barry hit on July 13, 2019, and much of the rice crop was damaged by wind that affected yields.

Early this week, forecasters have warned that Tropical Storm Cristobal could be headed to Louisiana. 🌩️



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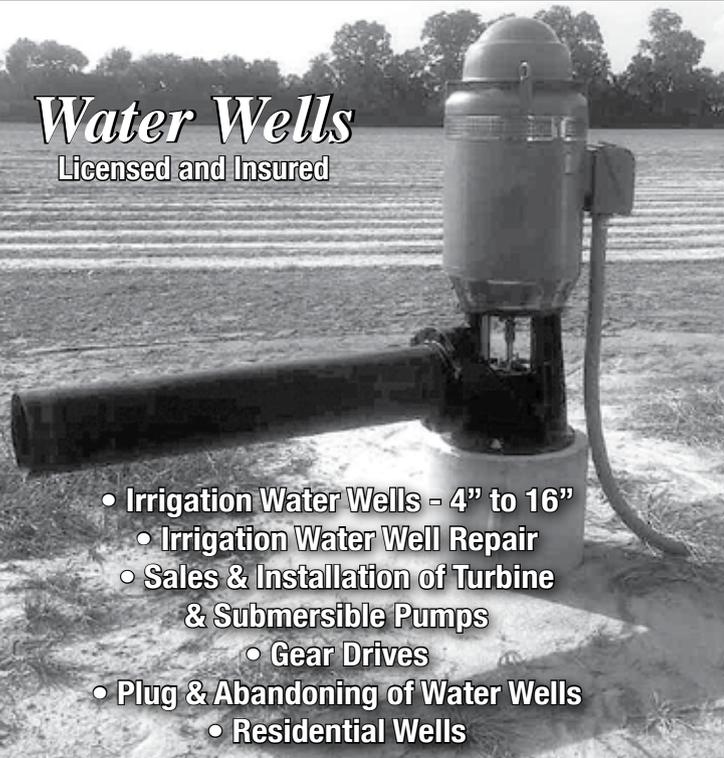
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# Weed control in horse pastures



**Howard J. Cormier**  
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Any horse owner who keeps their horse on pasture is aware of weeds that compete with good forages for space and nutrients. If you have a tractor and a 20-foot spray rig, you probably already know to do to. But what about if you have a 3- or 4-acre pasture, or smaller, and don't have access to big rigs? This article will give you information

about how you can still control weeds without major expense of a sophisticated and expensive sprayer.

Most of this information was presented by Dr. Ron Strahan in Dr. Neely Walker's Educated Horseman Series on the Louisiana Master Horseman Facebook page. Dr. Strahan and Dr. Neely are specialists with the LSU AgCenter. If you are on Facebook, look up the Louisiana Master Horseman Facebook page to see the pre-



Sprayer nozzle.

sentation. You can stop, back it up, rewatch, and take notes as needed. It was presented May 27, 2020.

The address is [https://www.facebook.com/neely.heidorn/videos/10156827219971612/?hc\\_ref=ARRmLMKgEfqxTXvy2BGvd7pSBIuALJWcYIuCZiALGDMAcZPe\\_9Q11OZC9wy2jOKQaL4](https://www.facebook.com/neely.heidorn/videos/10156827219971612/?hc_ref=ARRmLMKgEfqxTXvy2BGvd7pSBIuALJWcYIuCZiALGDMAcZPe_9Q11OZC9wy2jOKQaL4)

I realize that you can't easily copy that if you are reading this on hard copy, so it's easier to just go to the Facebook page.

The key points I want to make is that you can get a flood jet nozzle that attaches to most small 12 volt sprayers and sprays a swath 16-18 feet wide. Just take the wand off the sprayer, and screw in the flood jet nozzle on the valve handle. You might need an adapter, depending on the type of trigger valve you have. Teflon tape can be helpful in getting a good fit.

Next, set the nozzle up at a height recommended by the manufacturer, usually about 34 inches or so. Of course, it must be pointed towards the rear of the sprayer to "fan" out the herbicide mix. To attach the nozzle, you can rig any system up to the back of the spray rig on a 4 wheeler, small tractor, side by side, or riding lawn mower. Zip ties can be very helpful in attaching the handle where you want it. You can rig the wiring to a tail light or other switch so you can turn it on and off without reaching for the switch on the pump.

The final item to consider is calibration. Everyone wants to know, "how much poison do I put in a gallon? Let's not call it poison. It is herbicide - to kill weeds. Weeds are plants growing



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where they are not wanted.

How much herbicide to mix in the spray tank will depend on the stage of weeds, the speed of the spray rig, and the effective swath. (See Dr. Strahan's calibration instructions on the Facebook page.) You must determine how much water is being put out on an acre. You increase the amount of water applied by traveling more slowly with the spray rig. You put out less water by traveling faster. Do a calibration test, using the chart on the Facebook page for "Calibrating a Boomless S

prayer", with just water in the tank. When you determine how much water you put out when you cover an acre of land, you would put the recommended amount of herbicide per acre for every volume of water you put out per acre. You should plan to spray at least 10-12 gallons of water per acre for good coverage. Once you determine how much water you apply per acre with that rig, save the throttle and gear settings so you can go back to them next time you spray. If you put out 12 gallons per acre of water/mix in second gear at 1500 rpm's, you would use those settings each time you spray.

Most small pumps have the gallons per minute posted on the pump. If you prefer, put a plastic bag over the nozzle, and catch the water for 15 seconds, then multiply by 4 to get gallons per minute.

Just a tip: if you spray first thing in the morning while there is still dew on the ground, you can see your tracks. If you don't have a GPS on your sprayer (and most don't come with this), it can be hard to keep track of where you passed.

Make sure to read the label on the herbicide container, or a website. You are responsible for whatever is on the label, whether you know it or not.

Good luck! With a little homework, you can control major weeds and improve your horse pastures. 🍎

# A look at Bahia grass



*Andrew Granger,  
Vermilion Parish  
County Agent*

Bahia grass is a sod forming warm season perennial. It is popular in the southeast gulf coast region because it is well adapted to a wide range of soil conditions. It forms a dense sod so it resists weeds. It yields well on low fertility soils. It's planted by seed and can withstand heave grazing.

It forms a dense sod so it resists weeds. It yields well on low fertility soils. It's planted by seed and can withstand heave grazing. Bahia grass can be used for hay. When fertilized and harvested on time, it will produce a moderate quality hay. Bahia grass pasture is best utilized by cattle when not allowed to mature, mowing and heavy grazing pressure to keep it producing fresh growth will increase consumption.

There are several varieties available and some offer some unique advantages

over the others. One of the problems with Bahia is it is slow to establish. Tifquik, a selection out of Tifton 9, has been shown to germinate more rapidly and establish earlier. UF-riata provides more growth during cool weather. It can green up earlier in the spring and grow longer into the fall. While yield is similar to Tifton 9, it did show a production advantage, over Pensacola and Argentine in tests in Georgia and Florida.

Tests in Louisiana have compared Tifton 9, Argentine and Pensacola and results have varied from year to year. Likewise, quality differences were minimal when looking at TDN and Crude Protein. Because yield and quality differences appear to be similar for these three varieties farmers should base variety selection on seed availability and price.

Bahia grass offers several advantages and should be considered when developing a permanent pasture. If you have any questions or need help in getting a new pasture started give me a call at 898-4335 or email me at agranger@agcenter.lsu.edu 🍎

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 Dr. Mike Salassi, Associate Vice President, LSU AgCenter
- Activities of the Louisiana Rice Research Board ..... Mr. Richard Fontenot, Chairman, Louisiana Rice Research Board

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# AGTIVITIES

## June

- 18 LSU AgCenter Expo Field Day** – Field Day will be held at the Dean Lee Research Extension Center, 8105 Tom Bowman Drive, Alexandria, LA. Research on field crops, beef cattle and horticulture will be featured as well as an Industry EXPO highlighting various aspects of agriculture. For more information, contact Tara Smith at TSmith@agcenter.lsu.edu or 318-473-6520.

## July

- 1 H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station Annual Field Day** – Field day will be held at the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station, 1373 Caffey Road, Rayne, LA. For more information, contact Don Groth at 337-788-7531 or DGroth@agcenter.lsu.edu.

- 15 Sugarcane Field Day** – Field day will be held at the LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station, 5755 LSU AG Road, St. Gabriel, LA. AgCenter scientists will discuss research findings and recommendations with growers, processors, and others associated with the Louisiana sugarcane industry. For more information, contact Jeffrey Hoy at 225-578-1392 or JHoy@agcenter.lsu.edu.

- 18-19 Louisiana Quarter Horse Association Show – CRAWFISH CLASSIC** – Show will be held at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gozales, LA. Visit [www.lqha.com](http://www.lqha.com) or email [lqha@hughes.net](mailto:lqha@hughes.net)

## 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.

*If you have any important dates that you would like to have listed in this section, e-mail us at [anne@lafarmranch.com](mailto:anne@lafarmranch.com)*

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- **PRE-PLANT BURNDOWN:** texasweed, alligatorweed, morningglories<sup>1</sup>, small seeded broadleaves & hemp sesbania
- **PRE:** morningglories<sup>1</sup> & hemp sesbania<sup>1</sup>
- **POST:** alligatorweed, texasweed, hemp sesbania, jointvetch, morningglories<sup>1</sup>, smartweeds, & cutleaf groundcherry



The Gambit Logo is a registered trademark of Gowan Company, L.L.C.  
Permit<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of Nissan Chemical Industries LTD.  
<sup>1</sup> Suppression only.  
Always read and follow label instructions.

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