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GA COTTON GROWERS WILL FEEL IRMA EFFECTS THROUGHOUT HARVEST

Georgia's cotton growers lost at least 10 percent of their crop to Tropical Storm Irma but yield losses are likely to reach 20 percent and higher as the season unfolds, UGA Cotton Agronomist Jared Whitaker said.

"From preliminary observations, it is safe to say that every cotton field in Georgia has been negatively impacted by Irma to varying degrees," Whitaker wrote in a report presented to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue while Perdue was touring damaged cotton fields in Colquitt County Sept. 15.



The next issue of
GFB News Alert
comes out
October 4.

Unlike Hurricane Matthew last year, which only impacted Southeast Georgia, Irma whirled across the width of Georgia's Coastal Plain, where the majority of the state's cotton is grown, leaving lint laying on the ground or hanging in stretched sodden clumps from its burrs. Georgia Cotton Commission Chairman Bart Davis, who participated in the tour, said cotton growers

near Athens told him they've experienced similar damage.

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates about 50 percent of Georgia's cotton bolls were opening when Irma hit the state Sept. 11, but only a small percentage of Georgia's cotton crop was defoliated, so the storm's damage isn't a simple matter of calculating lint laying on the ground and quality losses. Growers and Whitaker say the biggest yield loss will come from the cotton plants Irma blew over.

"Cotton was blown around to varying degrees across the entire state. This can affect yield losses several different ways that can be difficult to estimate," Whitaker said. "Much of the cotton I've seen has been blown over and wrapped together causing spraying and harvesting issues for the rest of the season."

With plants laying across the rows where growers usually drive the wheels of their spraying equipment when they're defoliating their crop, many will have to rely on crop dusters. Colquitt County cotton grower Darren Hembree says his cotton was about three to four weeks away from being ready to defoliate. He estimates it costs him \$4 an acre to defoliate his crop using his equipment versus \$8 an acre to hire a crop duster.

"Cotton that is just beginning to open up is the heaviest it will be throughout its life. When opening proceeds, it will allow the plant to stand up. However, the rooting out around the stem

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could complicate the issue of cotton standing up,” Whitaker said.

Stalks were rooted out of the ground due to winds from different directions blowing the plants about. If the cotton plants don’t stand back up, growers will have a hard time picking bolls that do open.



“When the picker is going over cotton in the direction the stalk is laying down it’s not going to pick it, but it will do better if you come at it against the way it is laying,” Hembree said. “But we won’t have time to drive over [the same row of] the field in two different directions.”

Hembree, who chairs the Georgia Farm Bureau Cotton Committee, said he’ll have to drive his picker at a slower speed through the fields than he usually does when harvesting in hopes the machine will be able to grasp the cotton and to keep the twisted stalks from clogging up his machine. He thinks he’ll lose 15 to 20 percent of his crop due to his picker not being able to pick the cotton as it could if the plants were standing upright.

Fellow Colquitt County grower Gettis Wingate said he’s known growers to pick a field twice to harvest as much cotton as possible.

“With the price of diesel fuel and cotton it wouldn’t be worth it,” Gettis said.

Leaf scald is also expected to cost crop yield. When Irma blew the stalks over, she left the underside of the cotton leaves upturned and exposed to the sun scalding the leaves.

“Cotton leaves were turned upside down by the storm. The leaf isn’t made to catch sunlight from beneath,” Hembree explained. “The discoloration in these leaves is a troubling thing because the leaves feed the bolls.”

Whitaker reinforced Hembree’s concern when talking to Sec. Perdue at a stop in another cotton field that looked similar.

“Windblown cotton will suffer from the fact that leaves that were turned over will get sun bleached and ultimately fall off. This will greatly affect the ability of the crop to continue to fill and mature bolls that are immature.”

If the plants don’t get enough nutrients they will shed cotton bolls less than 15 days old, Whitaker said. Another problem is that bolls still on the stalks that are now laying close to the ground will be susceptible to boll rot if more rain comes.

“The fields of blown down, non-defoliated cotton could turn out to be in worse shape than the defoliated cotton,” Davis said.

Wingate, who has been growing cotton for 30 years, said he’s never experienced such a storm.

“Cotton isn’t bringing enough as it is and then you take 20 to 30 percent of your crop away, that’s a hard pill to swallow,” Wingate said. “You have crop insurance, but it will only cover your guarantee and you might make that much so you won’t really get money back.”

Whitaker says if only 10 percent of the cotton crop is lost statewide, this equates to a \$100 million loss for the industry.

Hembree has no way of knowing how much his cotton crop would have yielded an acre but he was hoping it might yield as much as 1,400 pounds of lint an acre. Between all the ways he may lose yield - lint lost on the ground or to boll rot, reduced lint yield to scalded leaves and unharvestable bolls, he’s thinking his yield may be down close to 30 percent.

“Say this was a 1,400 pound an acre crop and the storm took 400 pounds of yield an acre,” Hembree said. “With cotton bringing 70 cents a pound, that’s a loss of \$280 an acre just from a one day event. That’s kind of humbling.”

For photos of cotton and vegetable damage from Irma visit <http://bit.ly/irmacottonveg>.

GEORGIA PECAN GROWERS SUFFER ‘GENERATIONAL LOSS’ FROM IRMA

Most of Georgia’s dozens of agricultural commodities experienced damage from Tropical Storm Irma, but the state’s pecan growers were hit particularly hard.



The storm blew pecans out of trees, which will affect this year’s crop, creating an immediate cash flow problem for farmers who were in many cases a couple of weeks away from beginning harvest.

More concerning to most pecan producers, though, is that Irma knocked down thousands of mature and fully bearing trees, creating what Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black called a generational loss.

“It is a difficult thing,” Black said following a tour of Mason Farms in Peach County. “We lead the nation in pecan production. We’ve seen some generational damage today and we’re very concerned about that.”

According to the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, the farm gate value of Georgia pecans in 2015 was more than \$360 million, making it the state’s most valuable fruit or nut crop by far.

According to UGA Extension Pecan Specialist Lenny Wells, every orchard in the state suffered some level of damage. At minimum, this included lost limbs and nuts blown out of the trees.

“Percentage of nuts blown out varies by variety, crop load, and location,” Wells said. “On average I see about 10-15 percent of the nuts blown off of the trees. Most growers have at least some trees down.”

Wells said most of the trees were between the ages of five and 25.

“This is likely because the canopy of these trees is large in proportion to its root system which may not support the tree in such conditions, particularly if they are bearing a heavy crop load and the soil is moist,” Wells said.

Wells estimated a 30 percent crop loss in Georgia pecans, which would mean the value of the loss is more than \$100 million. That doesn’t include cost of storm cleanup which will have to be done before remaining pecans can be harvested.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said that moving forward, generating revenue from downed trees with their replacements could take 7-10 years after the trees are purchased and planted, which won’t happen until 2019 in many cases. Reaching full production potential can take as long as 12 years.

“It’s really disheartening to see,” Perdue said.

Still, the immediate issues are difficult to ignore for small beginning farmers.

“I’m really concerned about losing that cash flow for this year,” said Houston County Farm Bureau Young Farmer Chairman Cason Anderson. “The nuts that were blown out of the trees are still in the husks, and they’ll just rot on the ground.”

Anderson, who is a member of GFB’s Pecan Advisory Committee, has 300 acres of pecan trees and lost 126 trees to the storm. The damage comes with other issues he and other pecan producers must deal with.

“We’re not equipped to clean up 300 acres,” Anderson said.

For more photos of pecan damage from Irma visit <http://bit.ly/irmapecan>.

A LOOK AT IRMA'S AG DAMAGE TO OTHER CROPS

Peach County Farm Bureau Vice President Greg Gatliff grows about 450 acres of soybeans. Before Irma blew through, his beans were about four feet tall. The storm blew them over about two feet.

Gatliff said it's too early to estimate what percent of his crop he'll lose to the storm but he's guessing 10-20 percent. The crop loss will come from not being able to run his combine down straight rows and instead having to harvest at a cross angle, which he predicts will cause some of the soybeans to be knocked to the ground. He also expects to spend more on fuel to harvest his crop.

Across the road from Gatliff, Sledge Farms, a Georgia Farm Bureau Certified Farm Market, was among the Middle Georgia peach growers with peach trees blown over or left leaning from Irma. Nathan Sledge, who farms with his father, W. H. Sledge, said past experience has shown him it's futile to try to replant mature trees that have been completely uprooted.

"We're going to have to ride the orchard and count the number of trees that are a loss versus the ones we can save," Nathan said. "Then we'll determine whether to try to salvage the orchard or push it up and start over."

He explained that just replacing the unsalvageable trees with new ones doesn't work well because younger trees have different management needs than older trees.

Nathan said they will try to stand leaning or uprooted trees in the younger orchards that are about three and a half years old back up. That's because the root systems on these trees aren't as established as the older ones.

The financial investment the Sledges have in the young orchards also make it worth their time to try to save these trees. Nathan said a new 50-acre orchard is roughly a \$50,000-\$60,000 investment for the first three years before the trees start producing peaches, usually when they are four and a half years old.

"It'll be next April before we know if the trees will live because they are about to lose their leaves and go dormant," Sledge said. "We won't be able to assess the tree damage until next spring."

Other crops around the state:

Agritourism – According to Georgia Agritourism Association Executive Director Beth Oleson, the corn mazes were in great shape before the storm pushed over stalks in many of them, though since the storm passed, stalks in most of the affected corn mazes have returned to being upright. The ones in South Georgia appear to have recovered faster than the ones in the northern half of the state. Oleson also noted that several North Georgia Agritourism venues went without power for a week.

"They continue to prep for corn maze, conduct school field trips, and make lemonade out of lemons," Oleson said.

Beef cattle – Georgia Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Will Bentley said the state's herds weathered the storm well, but property damage has been significant.

"The largest amount of damage that I am hearing about occurred with wind damaged barns and trees that fell on fences," Bentley said. "I'm not sure what the cost of damage will be but I'm guessing well into the millions of dollars."

Dairy – Several dairies lost heifers/cows because of hypothermia. Many dairies lost power and had to use generators to power milking machines and to keep milk cold, according to Georgia Milk Producers Executive Director Farrah Newberry, who said Greene County was hit particularly hard. Newberry had not heard of any farmers dumping milk.



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Fruits and vegetables – Most vegetable growers in South Georgia had losses in staked crops like tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and other.



“The plants were blown over, damaging the plants and creating major harvest issues,” said Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Executive Director Charles Hall. “It is very hard to upright an entire row of plants.”

Hall said that smaller plants that are not staked had wind damage but most weathered the storm. He was unsure whether yields would be affected or harvest delayed.

Colquitt County grower Sam Watson, who grows 250 acres of peppers and eggplants combined, was left with fields of these plants leaning to the west when they should be standing upright. Fortunately, Watson had harvested his first crop of peppers and eggplants the Friday before Irma hit Georgia. He’s trying to restake the plants in hopes they will produce another crop.

“We’ve had a tremendous whitefly problem this year and have had the added cost of extra pesticides to keep that in check, now we’ve potentially got a weak crop,” Watson said.

Hay and forage – UGA Extension Forage Specialist Dennis Hancock expected producers to have crop loss in their second-cut silage crops. Hancock said the biggest risk at this point is from downed trees, damaged fence lines, and the potential for poisonings from those trees whose leaves are or can become toxic when consumed by cattle. (For more on this watch Hancock’s video blog at <https://youtu.be/uf7mmt1q-2W>).

Horticulture – Nursery owners from across the state had inventory blown over and shade cloth blown around, according to Georgia Green Industry Association Executive Director Chris Butts.

“I had the same reports from Cairo to Lavonia. It really equates to a lot of cleanup work but nothing in terms of facilities or crop damage,” said Butts.

Peanuts – The rain that came with Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irma might have actually helped portions the state’s peanut crop, according to Georgia Peanut Commission Executive Director Don Koehler. Most of the state’s peanuts had not been dug when the storm hit, and growers were able to resume picking after a few days.

“Our planting window was very broad this year and so we have late peanuts which needed rain to finish making a crop,” Koehler said. “We had gotten very dry and so the rainfall part was welcome and because peanuts grow close to the ground the wind didn’t cause much grief for peanuts.”

Koehler was quick to point out that while peanuts fared OK, most peanut farmers also produce other commodities that were hit hard, particularly cotton and pecans.

Poultry – Georgia Poultry Federation President Mike Giles said he had received some reports of minor wind damage, though he was not aware of any catastrophic losses.

“The biggest disruption came from loss of power at the farm level, but most farms are back on power now. The have generators so they were able to continue operating while the power was off,” Giles said.

Tobacco – UGA Extension Tobacco Specialist J. Michael Moore expected 15 to 20 percent of the 2017 crop would be lost due to Hurricane Irma, and that tobacco harvested late in the season would likely have low quality.

“The bright spot for us is we did not lose the entire crop,” Moore told GFB media. “Many of our growers were already finished harvesting and tobacco has been bringing a good price at the marke this year.”

Photos: <http://bit.ly/irmaothercrops>.

FEDERAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO AID IN HURRICANE RECOVERY

Farmers affected by Tropical Storm Irma may have access to a variety of federal assistance to help them recover. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, during his visit to Georgia on Sept. 15, encouraged farmers and ranchers who sustained damage from the storm to contact the USDA's offices. In a tweet on Sept. 18 he said the department would expedite aid. USDA Rural Development will provide tools and flexibility on loans as farmers work to recover.

Farmers may find out what assistance is available by contacting the following agencies:

Farm Service Agency – website www.fsa.usda.gov; phone 706-546-2266. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is authorizing emergency procedures on a case-by-case basis to assist impacted borrowers, livestock owners, contract growers, and other producers. These measures apply only to counties impacted by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-determined tropical storm, typhoon, or hurricane, including Harvey and Irma that have received a primary Presidential Disaster Declaration and those counties contiguous to such designated counties. The FSA also administers the Emergency Conservation Program, which helps farmers and ranchers to repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters.

USDA Rural Development – www.rd.usda.gov; phone 706-546-2162. USDA Rural Development business programs can help provide financial relief to small businesses as a result of natural disasters.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – www.nrcs.usda.gov; phone 706-546-2272.

Risk Management Agency – www.rma.usda.gov; phone 229-242-7235.



IRMA LEAVES FLORIDA AG REELING

Florida agriculture took a hard hit from Irma. The Florida Farm Bureau (FFB) reports that early estimates suggest the total cost of the storm for agriculture will be in the billions.

At least 60 percent of green fruit was knocked off trees in the main citrus growing region. Standing water has blocked farmers' access to fields, cattle and groves. Farmers who had planted fall vegetables, such as tomatoes, report a near-total loss. FFB says ornamental plant growers indicate many greenhouses and shade covers were either partially standing or unusable. Some nursery owners say less than 50 percent of their plants are marketable.

In Hendry County, just east of Fort Myers, and Glades County, north of Hendry, Irma left hundreds of sugarcane plants submerged in water, buried in the ground or blown away. Palm Beach County sugarcane appears to be shredded, but farmers there say new growth is possible, giving hope for a partial harvest.

Across Florida, standing water is preventing farmers accessing their fields, groves and cattle pastures. In east Florida's Brevard County, an estimated 50,000 acres of ranchland is flooded, likely imposing a weight loss in calves shipped for processing.

Farmers across the state are faced with repairing or replacing irrigation systems, machinery and other infrastructure damaged by the storm.

Florida Farm Bureau has established a Hurricane Irma Relief Fund for Agriculture. For more information or to donate, visit <http://bit.ly/FFBIrmafund>.

To see a video of the impact at Butler Oaks Dairy click here https://www.facebook.com/pg/butleroaks/videos/?ref=page_internal

GFB ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR AITC TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Georgia Farm Bureau is accepting applications for the Georgia Agriculture in the Classroom 2017 Teacher of the Year Award, which recognizes outstanding teachers who actively engage students in learning about agriculture. Certified teachers currently using agricultural concepts in non-vocational agriculture classroom settings at the pre-K through 12th-grade levels are eligible.

The deadline to apply is Oct. 13. A panel of judges will select the winner, who will receive a \$500 cash award and a trip to the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, which will be held June 26-29, 2018, in Portland, Maine.

The award will be presented during the Celebrating Ag Literacy event on Dec. 3 at the GFB Convention on Jekyll Island.

Applications and complete criteria and instructions are available online at http://www.gfbfoundation.org/aitc_teacher.html, and must be submitted to GFB Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Donna Rocker by email at dhrocker@gfb.org. Rocker may be contacted at that email address or by phone at 478-474-0679 ext. 5365 for more information.



USDA TO SURVEY FRUIT GROWERS ABOUT CHEMICAL USE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will survey fruit growers in 12 states, including Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, for its biennial Fruit Chemical Use Survey.

The survey will collect information on bearing acreage, pest management practices, pesticide application, acres treated and rates applied for more than 22 fruit crops.

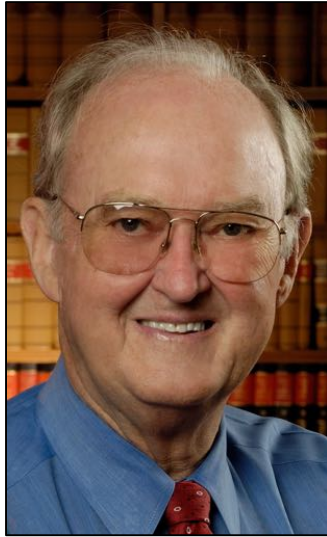
The Fruit Chemical Use Survey will provide information about current crop production practices in the United States. The results of this survey will paint a detailed picture of pesticide use as well as other pest management practices used by the fruit growers across the nation.

Within the next few weeks, NASS representatives will contact selected Florida, Georgia and South Carolina growers to arrange in-person interviews for conducting the survey. The results of this survey will be available in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by federal law.

Survey results will be published in NASS's online database, Quick Stats, in July 2018. This database and all NASS reports are available on the chemical use survey program website: <http://bit.ly/NASSSurveyGuide>. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Southern Regional Field Office at 1-800-253-4419.

LONGTIME GA AG COMMISSIONER TOMMY IRVIN DIES

Tommy Irvin, who served as Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture from 1969 to 2011, died on Sept. 15. He was 88.



Tommy Irvin

“Georgia Farmers and Georgia Farm Bureau lost a longtime advocate and friend with the passing of Tommy Irvin,” said Georgia Farm Bureau President Gerald Long. “Commissioner Irvin was a fine gentleman and public servant, and he was steadfast in his support of Georgia farmers. We offer our sincere condolences to his family at this difficult time.”

A member of Habersham County Farm Bureau for more than 50 years, Irvin received the American Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award in 2010.

Irvin served in the Georgia House of Representatives for 10 years, including work on the House Agriculture, Education and Appropriations committees. His 41-year stint as agriculture commissioner was the longest term of consecutive service by any state agriculture commissioner in the U.S.

Irvin was particularly active in developing international trade, meeting with representatives of the Soviet Union, China and Cuba to procure trade agreements. Under his leadership, Georgia developed approaches to eradicate animal diseases, control plant pests and promote food safety. The USDA and leaders in other countries used many of the procedures developed during Irvin’s leadership as models for their own programs.

In addition to his work as commissioner, Irvin was a champion for agriculture education. He is known for his efforts to meet with youth who are involved in or interested in agriculture or related fields of study.

“Commissioner Irvin loved serving Georgia’s farmers and consumers for over three generations. He touched us all with his unsurpassed spirit of stewardship, commitment and work ethic,” said Gary Black, Irvin’s successor as agriculture commissioner. “Beyond agriculture, his commitment to education put a strong and admirable exclamation point on his life’s work. We pray for and offer our condolences to the Irvin family during this difficult period.”

During a tour of agricultural damage in South Georgia, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue remembered Irvin as a trendsetter for the advancement of agriculture.

“Obviously he was an icon among his colleagues and well-known and well-respected among the national association of ag officials,” said Perdue, who was Georgia’s governor during Irvin’s last term in office. “He served for so many years, I feel like everybody knew him.”

In addition to his parents, Irvin was preceded in death by his wife, Bernice Frady Irvin; brother, Curtis Irvin; sisters, Brenda Smith, Shirley Worley, and Karen Gilstrap. Irvin was a member of Antioch Baptist Church and was Deacon Emeritus.

Survivors include his daughters and sons-in-law Londa and Buddy Sprinkle, of Mount Airy; Lisa and Bill Collier, of Mount Airy; sons and daughters-in-law, James and Susan Irvin, of Toccoa; Johnny and Ann Irvin, of Tallulah Falls and David and Elaine Irvin, of Clarkesville, as well as eight brothers and sisters, 14 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the charity of one’s choice or the Georgia Masonic Home for Children, 811 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31201-6779.

RESEARCHERS TO STUDY USE OF UPPER FLORIDAN AQUIFER

As concerns grow over the ability of the Upper Floridan Aquifer to keep up with demands for water from residents, farms and forests, four universities are teaming up to look at the economic sustainability of agriculture and forestry in north Florida and south Georgia that rely on this water supply.

The Upper Floridan Aquifer supports agricultural activities worth more than \$7.5 billion and provides drinking water to 10 million people, said Puneet Dwivedi, assistant professor of sustainability sciences at the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. "But it is facing significant threats to water quality and quantity, which could potentially harm food security, fiber production and vital ecosystem services," he said.

The researchers will focus on developing new best management practices and increasing farmers' adoption of existing best practices, leading to reduced water use and improved water quality in the aquifer.

Researchers from the University of Georgia are collaborating with scientists from three other universities on the five-year, \$5 million project. Led by the University of Florida Water Institute, UGA will partner with faculty from Auburn University and Albany State University on the study, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Researchers from all four universities will conduct experiments to develop farming practices that reduce water use and fertilizer loss while still resulting in a profitable crop yield. Researchers from Florida and Auburn University will then create computer models that can predict the impacts of various land and water uses.

The study will include a model for understanding how the adoption of best management practices will change the current land use in the study area and the consequences of such changes on water quality and quantity, the creation and revision of new and existing farm-level budgets to address how changes to best management practices affect costs at the farm level.

For more on the study visit <https://news.uga.edu/releases/article/upper-floridan-aquifer/>.

GEORGIA FARM BUREAU DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETINGS

Sept. 21	9th District	Mitchell County Ag Center	7 p.m.	Camilla
Sept. 25	4th District	Oconee County Civic Ctr.	7 p.m.	Watkinsville
Sept. 26	6th District	Poplar Springs N. Bapt. Church	7 p.m.	Dublin
Oct. 2	3rd District	Center at Arbor Conn.	7 p.m.	Douglasville
Nov. 13	7th District	First Baptist Church	7 p.m.	Statesboro

Contact your county Farm Bureau office for more information. Note: These meetings are for Farm Bureau members only and are not open to the general public.

DAWSON COUNTY FFA ANTIQUE TRACTOR SHOW

Sept. 23 **Tractor Supply Company** **10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** **Dawsonville**

Antique tractor enthusiasts are invited to bring their tractors for this free show. Tractors may begin to arrive at 8 a.m. and all should be in place by 9:30 a.m. All makes and models, and restored or everyday work tractors are welcome. For more information contact Tammy Wood at Dawson County Farm Bureau at 706-265-3350 or Keith Pankey at 706-265-6555 ext. 1560. No pre-registration is required; drive-ups the day of the event are welcome. The Dawson County FFA will sell concessions and take donations to support member involvement on leadership trips and Career Development Events. The Dawsonville Tractor Supply Company is located at 6921 Hwy. 53 E., Dawsonville, GA 30534.

BARN BASH CHARITY CONCERT

Sept. 23 **Double P Farms** **3 p.m.** **Williamson**

Marc Broussard will headline this inaugural event to benefit the Brand Brown Memorial Scholarship Fund. Brandon lost his battle with Glioblastoma on Feb. 15. This event will raise money for scholarships that will be given out to a Pike County High School senior in memory of Brandon. This year's event will have bounce houses, rock climbing wall, great food vendors and of course great entertainment with Marc Broussard, Southbound and Lambert Osteen & Friends. Double P Farms is located at the intersection of Dunbar School Road and Jonathan's Roost Road in Williamson. Gates open at 2 p.m. and music starts at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the gate. To purchase advance tickets visit <https://www.xorbia.com/e/barnbash/2017>.

FIREWISE ON THE FARM FIELD DAY

Sept. 26 **William Harris Homestead, 3636 Hwy 11 N, 9:30 a.m. – noon** **Monroe**

This free field day, sponsored in part by Walton County Farm Bureau and Georgia Farm Bureau, promotes fire safety on the farm and in the home. Numerous agencies will give demonstrations and provide information about fire safety. The fire departments will demonstrate equipment and methods of prevention and easy and convenient methods of extinguishing fires and how to equip a utility task vehicle with a small tank of water that is easily transported for equipment fires. For more information email info.ccrd@gmail.com or call the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC & D Council at 706-894-1591.

GEORGIA FARM TO SCHOOL SUMMIT

Oct. 5 & 6 Helms College

Augusta

The Farm to School Summit connects schools, early care centers, and local farms and distributors to serve and champion healthy, local meals in cafeterias, improve student nutrition, and increase farm and gardening educational opportunities. This year's summit welcomes farmers, teachers, early care educators and administrators, school nutrition staff, students, parents, and others interested in learning more about Georgia's farm to school movement. Highlights include the opening keynote address from national farm to school leader Betti Wiggins of Detroit Public Schools, closing keynote address from Burke County School Nutrition Director and President-elect of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Donna Martin, workshops, educational sessions and networking. For more information visit <http://bit.ly/farmtoschoolsummit>.

ASA DUPONT YOUNG LEADER PROGRAM

Oct. 6

deadline to apply

Applications are being accepted for the ASA DuPont Young Leader program, a challenging and educational two-part training program. Phase I of the 2017–18 program will take place at the DuPont Pioneer headquarters in Johnston, Iowa, Nov. 28–30. The program continues Feb. 25–28, 2018 in Anaheim, California, in conjunction with the annual Commodity Classic Convention and Trade Show. Soybean grower couples and individuals are encouraged to apply for the program which focuses on leadership and communication, the latest agricultural information and the development of a strong peer network. To apply, visit <https://soygrowers.com/learn/young-leader-program-application/>.

2017 GFB HAY CONTEST

Oct. 31

deadline to enter

Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) members who grow Bermudagrass hay are encouraged to enter the GFB 2017 Quality Hay Contest. Hay entered in the contest will be tested at the University of Georgia Testing Lab using the Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) Test, which predicts fiber digestibility and likely animal intake of hay. Producers may enter more than one sample in the contest. There is a \$20 entry fee for each sample entered in the contest to cover lab costs. Applications and instructions for submitting samples are available at county Farm Bureau offices or may be downloaded at the GFB website http://www.gfb.org/commodities/hay_contest.html. Checks to cover the entry fee should be made payable to Georgia Farm Bureau. Entry forms and samples should be sent to the GFB Public Policy Department, Agricultural Programs, 1620 Bass Road Macon, Ga., 31210. **The deadline to enter is Oct. 31.** The first-place prize is free use of a Vermeer 504R Signature Baler for one year courtesy of Vermeer.

MONSANTO'S AMERICA'S FARMERS GROW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Nov. 1

deadline to apply

Farmers in 39 Georgia counties have until 6 p.m. Nov. 1 to register a charity of their choice in their county to win \$2,500 in the America's Farmers Grow Communities program. Eligible counties are: Appling, Baker, Berrien, Bleckley, Brooks, Bulloch, Burke, Calhoun, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crisp, Decatur, Dooly, Early, Grady, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Lee, Macon, Miller, Mitchell, Randolph, Screven, Seminole, Sumter, Tattnall, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Wilcox and Worth. An additional five counties will be chosen from a pool of entrants from other counties. There were at least 30,000 acres of corn, soybeans, cotton and/or vegetables planted in these counties in 2016. The program is open to farmers, age 21 and older in eligible counties, actively farming a minimum of 250 acres. No purchase needed to win. For more information or to apply, visit www.growcommunities.com or call 1-877-267-3332 to apply.

AG LABOR RELATIONS FORUM

Nov. 7 & 8 UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center Tifton

Georgia Farm Bureau and other ag organizations are collaborating with the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association (GFVGA) to host this forum, designed to help farmers and ag business owners comply with existing labor laws and policies. The forum will be relevant to all commodities that rely on labor. The target audience is farmers, farm office managers and personnel responsible for monitoring rules and regulations for their organizations. Leading labor attorneys and human resource specialists will teach the sessions. For more information or to register visit www.georgiaaglaborforum.com or call the GFVGA at 706-845-8200.

GFB TAKING LISTINGS FOR HAY DIRECTORY

Farm Bureau members with hay for sale or offering custom harvesting or custom sprigging services are invited to list in the 2017/18 GFB Quality Hay Directory published on the GFB website. Because this directory is now offered exclusively online, hay can be listed or removed from the site as your inventory dictates. To participate, please complete a submission form available at your county Farm Bureau office or online at www.gfb.org/hay. Please include a \$10 check made payable to Georgia Farm Bureau for each listing of hay, custom harvesting or custom sprigging. Multiple listings are allowed.

FARM BUREAU-AFFILIATED FARMERS MARKETS

CANTON FARMERS MARKET

Through Oct. 28

Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cannon Park

Canton

This market features 100 percent GA Grown produce and handcrafted items. Cherokee County Farm Bureau will hold an event once a month at the market promoting watermelon day, apple day, peach day etc.

COBB COUNTY FARM BUREAU FARMERS MARKET

Tuesdays 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Lost Mountain Park Powder Springs

Cobb County Farm Bureau (CCFB) in cooperation with Cobb County Parks & Recreation is hosting this farmers market. CCFB is offering vendor space to farmers, growers and producers in Cobb and surrounding counties, with the goal of offering locally grown food to the community. Each vendor must be a Farm Bureau member. Vendor fees are only \$5 per week, with a discount for paying in full for the entire market season. For more information contact cobbcountyfarmbureau@gmail.com or Debbie Payne at dmpayne@gfb.org or 770-943-3531.

MONROE FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays until Oct. 7 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Court Street, Downtown Monroe

This market, sponsored in part by Walton County Farm Bureau, features fresh produce and goods from local farmers, work from local artisans and family friendly activities. For more information visit www.monroedowntownfarmersmarket.com

PAULDING COUNTY FARM BUREAU FARMERS MARKET

Thursdays through Oct. 26 3 p.m.-7 p.m., 549 Hardee St. Dallas

Paulding County Farm Bureau (PCFB) is accepting vendors for its weekly farmers market being held at the PCFB office. Visit the market's Facebook page (<http://bit.ly/PCFBmkt>) for weekly updates. Vendors sell locally grown produce and other ag commodities or homemade crafts. There is no fee to participate but vendors must be Farm Bureau members. To participate in the market, contact Tracy Grice at 770-445-6681 or email her at tcgrice@gfb.org.

ROCKDALE/DEKALB FARM BUREAU FARMERS MARKET

Tuesdays & Saturdays 8 a.m. – noon, RDCFB office Conyers

The Rockdale/DeKalb Farm Bureau Farmers Market will be held at 1400 Parker Rd. SE in Conyers. The public is invited to stop by and shop for fresh, locally grown vegetables, dairy products, crafts and more. The market is expected to run into late summer or early fall when produce production ends. For more information contact the Rockdale/DeKalb County Farm Bureau office at 770-922-3566.

SHIELDS-ETHRIDGE HERITAGE FARM CULTIVATORS MARKET

Oct. 21 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. 2355 Ethridge Rd. Jefferson

Jackson County Farm Bureau (JCFB) sponsors this open-air market that features local farmers and entrepreneurs selling products they make or grow in a festival atmosphere. Market held rain or shine. The Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm is an outdoor ag museum that functions as an educational and interpretative facility. Proceeds from the market will be used for restoration projects at the farm. If you are interested in having a booth at the market, contact JCFB Office Manager Denise Temple at df temple@gfb.org or call 706-367-8877 or visit www.shieldsethridgefarminc.com to complete an application online.

UNION COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

Tuesdays 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Saturdays 7 a.m. – 1 p.m., 148 Old Smokey Road Blairsville

The public is welcome to shop for fresh, locally grown vegetables from local farmers. For more information contact Mickey Cummings or Kristy Peney at 706-781-8802 or visit www.ucfarmersmarket.com. Union County Farm Bureau will sponsor a tractor show at the market Labor Day weekend.

WOODSTOCK FARM FRESH MARKET

Saturdays through September 8:30 am to Noon. Woodstock

Located on Market Street in Downtown Woodstock, the market features vendors who grow at least 85 percent of the products they sell. The Cherokee County Farm Bureau is partnering with the market to bring special events to the market throughout the 2017 season. For more information call 770-924-0406 or visit <http://bit.ly/WoodstockFarmFreshMarket>.