



PABC Journal



FASC Annual Meeting Rescheduled for March

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forestry Association of South Carolina (FASC) has rescheduled their annual meeting for **March 24-26, 2021**. The meeting will be held at the Myrtle Beach Marriott at Grand Dunes.

Certified Prescribed Fire Manager Certification

The SC Forestry Commission is offering training for individuals seeking to become Certified Prescribed Fire Managers on the following dates and locations:

December 9, 2020 and January 13, 2021—Columbia SC

January 27, 2021—Florence, SC

February 10, 2021—Moncks Corner, SC

For registration:

<https://www.state.sc.us/forest/docs/cpfmregistration2020.pdf>

More info:
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Agricultural Technology Campus Brings \$314 Million Investment to Hampton County

A 1,000-acre agribusiness cluster in Hampton County will employ 1,547 people in growing, packing and shipping tomatoes, leafy greens, blueberries and other fresh produce—using a cutting-edge approach called Controlled Environment Agriculture.

The \$314 million Agriculture Technology Campus is a joint venture encompassing multiple greenhouses and hoop-houses, a 150,000 square-foot distribution center, and a large co-packer centrally located within the cluster, which is situated near I-95.

(cont. on page 2, see Ag Technology Campus)

SC AGRIBUSINESS NEARS \$50B IN ECONOMIC IMPACT

The SC Department of Agriculture (SCDA) has announced the results of a new study showing South Carolina's agribusiness industry nearing \$50 billion in economic impact. According to the study by Joseph C. Von Nessen, Ph.D., a research economist at the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business, South Carolina is making steady progress toward "50 By 20," the SCDA's goal of growing the agribusiness sector to a \$50 billion-a-year industry by 2020. According to data from 2018 – the most recent available – agribusiness had a \$46.2 billion annual impact on South Carolina's economy. That's up from \$34 billion in 2006 and \$41.7 billion in 2015. South Carolina agribusiness accounted for 246,957 jobs and more than \$9.6 billion in labor income in 2018. The study breaks down direct effects of agriculture and forestry. Agriculture has a \$13.35 billion effect, and forestry has a \$16.24 billion effect.

Also, the study found that South Carolinians are purchasing more locally grown foods. South Carolinians purchased \$176.3 million more from South Carolina farmers in 2018 than they did in 2010 across all Certified South Carolina food categories. That accounts for an additional \$273.5 million in economic activity, 1,615 jobs and \$51.2 million in labor income for South Carolinians each year. These results show Certified South Carolina delivers a strong return on investment for South Carolina taxpayers.

(cont. on page 2, see \$50B Economic Impact)



SC Trucking Association President & CEO Rick Todd welcomes Governor Henry McMaster at the Be Pro Be Proud launch event.

BE PRO BE PROUD SC BECOMES REALITY

South Carolina's top-of-the-line mobile workshop for skilled trades, Be Pro Be Proud SC, became a reality recently, with a launch event at the State Farmers Market.

Governor Henry McMaster was a featured speaker at the event, which showcased the 53-foot, double-expandable 18 wheeler that will visit schools and communities to offer students and parents a chance to learn more about skilled trade opportunities available in SC.

The project is a joint collaboration of the Associated Industries of South Carolina Foundation (AISCF), which consists of five-member organizations, including PABC members: Carolinas AGC, the Forestry Association of South Carolina, and the SC Trucking Association. The SC Chamber of Commerce and the Home Builders of SC are also members.

Ag Technology Campus (cont. from page 1)

This project brings together several powerhouse agribusinesses—Mastronardi, a Canadian company that sells tomatoes under the Sunset label; LiDestri Food and Drink, which will provide processing, packing, shipping and logistical services; and Clear Water Farms, an experienced indoor grower of leafy greens—along with the GEM Opportunity Zone Fund.

Controlled Environment Agriculture is a technology-based approach to indoor farming that allows growers to minimize space and conserve water while controlling factors like weather.

For the past three years, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture has been exploring the potential for Controlled Environment Agriculture to boost the state's agricultural economy, not only providing new jobs but offering opportunities for existing South Carolina farmers as agribusiness operations build a supply chain. Growing and sourcing locally grown foods helps ensure food supply chain security, a need amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, and minimizes operating expenses through co-location.

The Agricultural Technology Campus cluster is projected to increase total economic input in Hampton County by \$551.7 million a year, or \$7.4 billion over 15 years, according to an economic impact study commissioned by the Department. The campus is expected to be operational in 2022.

"The Agricultural Technology Campus investment in South Carolina agriculture is transformative, creating jobs in the Hampton County region and future opportunities for South Carolina farmers," said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. "A Controlled Environment Agriculture project of this scale will conserve land and water and offer South Carolinians more chances to buy produce."

"This is a historic day for a region steeped in agricultural history," said GEM Opportunity Zone Fund CEO Zeb Portanova. "I am thrilled to be part of this innovative group looking to grow high quality agriculture across the region and will deploy sustainable practices such as using recycled rainwater to irrigate our greenhouses while also providing South Carolina farmers access to our state-of-the-art co-packing facility. This will help pave the way for citizens to visit their local grocery stores, where they will be able to purchase pesticide-free, locally grown produce."

\$50B Economic Impact (cont. from page 1)

Launched in 2007, Certified South Carolina is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) to promote South Carolina food products. Previous research has found a 78 percent recognition rate for the Certified South Carolina brand among in-state consumers.

"Dr. Von Nessen's findings tell us why Certified South Carolina is so important: Consumers want local food, and this program is helping them find it," said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. "I'm thrilled that South Carolinians continue to support our state's 24,000-plus farmers."

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Kemp McLeod, owner of McLeod Farms in McBee, SC.

CAFLS Honors Kemp McLeod With Distinguished Alumni Award

Clemson Agriculture Forestry and Life Science (CAFLS) recently named Kemp McLeod, owner of McLeod Farms in McBee, SC, as the recipient of the 2020 CAFLS Distinguished Alumni Award. The award was made during a virtual presentation by Dean Keith Belli and Dr. George Askew with President Jim Clements also presenting comments.

Mr. McLeod, a 1976 Clemson graduate, was the 2017 SC Farmer of the Year and has received the Order of the Palmetto and the John W. Parrish Agriculture Leadership Award. He has served as president of the SC Peach Council, is a member of the National Peach Council, a former Commissioner of the Chesterfield County Conservation District and was named Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year.

SC State 1890 Names Director for New Santee -Wateree Region Office

With the creation of a new regional office, SC State University 1890 Research & Extension will better serve its clientele in the newly formed Santee-Wateree region office, now based in Sumter. Formerly known as the Williamsburg Cluster, the Santee-Wateree region office will continue to serve Clarendon, Lee, Sumter and Williamsburg counties.

Ronnie Rhodes, '96, will head the new office as regional director, managing the programs and services that will be offered to individuals, families and businesses throughout the service areas. He joined the SC State University program on July 1.

Mr. Rhodes has prior experience as a teacher assistant and coach, service coordinator, substance abuse counselor and program coordinator. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology at SC State University and a Masters of Art degree in counseling at Webster University.



Ronnie Rhodes



The SC Poultry Federation (SCPF) was unable to hold its Annual Conference this past summer due to COVID-19, but held its first Friends of the Flock event at City Roots in Columbia in October. Above from right, Charleston Laffin, SCPF Executive Director and Dr. Dave Wicker, SCPF Board Chairman recognize guest speaker Governor Henry McMaster at the event.



South Carolina Farm Bureau hosted a roundtable in Hampton County with US Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. The event, held in September, gave Farm Bureau members the opportunity to discuss the various agricultural topics and hear more about the USDA programs. Above from left, SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, USDA Secretary Perdue, and SC Farm Bureau President Harry Ott.



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We're on the web
Scagribusiness.org

CEO MESSAGE FROM RONNIE SUMMERS

As the third quarter concluded and PABC and its members enter the latter stages of 2020, each of us can already recognize that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to forget the uniqueness of 2020. I would not even try to list all the unanticipated challenges and activities observed year to date (too many). **But**, COVID-19's impact on the world, our country, and our state is undeniable. The virus has been so devastating and likely represents a "game-changing" experience for most of us for the foreseeable future.

Who would have ever thought they would be doing business by "zoom", working a higher percentage of their time from home, transacting complex business matters without face to face interaction, and on and on? I know I did not foresee this coming at the current level. Regardless, our PABC members and the PABC staff have kept moving forward adjusting to remain as productive as possible despite the challenges faced.

The branches of government at both the state and federal level have likewise continued to operate albeit in a non-traditional manner compared to what we are accustomed. Has government been as productive as desired? No. But, similar to businesses, our countries representation has been forced to re-direct their priorities and improvise to deal with the issues at hand. Kudos to the state of SC for finding ways to continue with governance even after the spring session concluded in May with so many matters unresolved by coming back to the Statehouse the past several weeks and wrapping up some important legislation. On a federal level, making the Payroll Protection Program and Coronavirus Food Assistance Program functional proved positive. Productive? No doubt, the effort could have been better, but not so bad given the extreme circumstances presented.

By the way during these atypical times, SC landed likely the largest AGRIBUSINESS project ever in the state thanks to a broad collaborative effort led by SCDA and Commerce! In addition, a new Economic Impact Study on SC AgriBusiness thru 2018 indicates SC Agribusiness is still growing, and for that, each of us should be proud. **A huge THANK YOU to all of our PABC members who support SC Agribusiness with your finances, your time, your sharing of resources, and your energy!**

Clemson Researchers Developing Water-Use Technologies to Aid SC Farmers

Irrigation is an important tool that likely has been used in agriculture for about as long as humans have been cultivating plants, but just how much water is enough?

Researchers from the Clemson University Edisto Research and Education Center (REC) are working on projects they believe will help South Carolina farmers conserve water and save money.

One project, funded by the state legislature, is developing software that can help take the guessing out of irrigation system efficiency. It is a GPS-based center-pivot auditing software used to calculate water-distribution uniformity in fields.

"This software performs health checks on pivots to show farmers when they are over irrigating and where they are under irrigating," said Kendall Kirk, precision agriculture engineer. "Over irrigating can cause leaching of nutrients and under irrigating can cause water stress which can lead to yield deficits."

The software generates reports outlining costs of over-and under-irrigation. Using this information, farmers can assess return on investment of retrofits, adjustments and repairs.

After the software has been developed, Cal Sawyer, Clemson associate professor and Clemson Extension water resources specialist, will develop a training program to show farmers, agents and consultants how to use it.