



PABC Journal



SCDA ROLLS OUT NEW CARD FOR AG SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS

In 2022, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture is rolling out a handy new card for farmers to use for agricultural sales tax exemptions.

South Carolina state law offers several sales tax exemptions for items used in agricultural production.

For many years, farmers have had to fill out a paper form, the ST-8F, to receive these exemptions.

But after April 1, 2022, farmers must instead show their SCATE (South Carolina Agricultural Tax Exemption) card to retailers to demonstrate they are eligible for these exemptions.

The program is similar to Georgia's GATE card, but unlike in Georgia, South Carolina users do not need to meet a minimum farm income threshold to be eligible.

It's important to understand that state law is not changing. Farmers will still be able to receive the same exemptions as before.

(cont. on pg. 3, see SCATE)

Volume 20, Issue 1

WINTER 2022

For 2022 Rising Commodity Prices Projected, But Costs Will Go Up Too

There was good news and bad news at the 6th Annual South Carolina Ag Outlook Conference held in November at Clemson University's Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia. The good news: sales prices for commodities are trending up; unfortunately, so are the costs associated with producing them.

Members of the Clemson Extension Agribusiness Team gave 2022 outlooks for major commodities to help identify opportunities and threats for the financial success of South Carolina producers.

"We need to make sure our farmers are equipped with the best information possible to make sure they stay on the farm," Clemson Extension Director Tom Dobbins said. "We can talk about sustainability all we want, but sustainability to me is profitability. If they're not making a profit, they're not going to be on the farm very long."

Among various commodities, Clemson Agribusiness Program Team Director Nathan Smith said South Carolina planted acreage for peanuts dropped to 69,000 acres in 2021 with an average yield forecast at 4,100 pounds/acre, matching a record set in 2007.

And while 2021 U.S. planted acreage decreased 5% to 1.58 million acres, the yield is projected at 4,105 pounds/acre, the second largest ever if realized, Smith said. *(cont. on pg. 2, see Ag Outlook)*

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HELPS CHART COURSE FOR PABC



PABC Chairman Harry Ott welcomes participants to the Strategic Planning Session, held at Buck Ridge Plantation this past fall. The one-day event provided Board members an opportunity to brainstorm and set goals for PABC's strategic direction in the future.

Eligible Farmers Can Receive Food Safety Improvement Reimbursements

Reimbursements of up to \$2,000 per year for on-farm food safety improvements are available to eligible farmers.

Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture specialty crop block grant funding administered by the S.C. Department of Agriculture, farmers covered by the federal Produce Safety Rule can receive reimbursements for improvements such as worker training resources, hand washing stations and harvest bins. Such measures help reduce the risk of food borne illness in fruits and vegetables.

Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until depletion. The deadline to apply for reimbursement is August 1, 2022.

"I hope South Carolina produce farmers will explore this opportunity to upgrade their food safety protections," S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers said. "These cost-share grants are an excellent use of taxpayer funds as they support farms that are already demonstrating a commitment to food safety."

Visit agriculture.sc.gov/grants to download the application, request an on-farm evaluation and learn about next steps.

The state agriculture department has allocated more than \$600,000 from the 2021 USDA specialty crop block grant program to 12 projects aimed at increasing the competitiveness of South Carolina specialty crops, including strawberries, watermelons and peaches.

SCFC Offers Updated Edition of Tree Identification Manual

The South Carolina Forestry Commission is proud to present to the citizens of South Carolina this updated edition of the agency's native forest tree identification manual, originally produced in 2003. This greatly improved guide represents a significant upgrade to its predecessor in scope and detail. In addition to replacing one-color line drawings of trees and their identifying characteristics with full-color photographs, more than a dozen native species have been added than appeared in the first edition, added a section on tree and leaf anatomy, incorporated range maps for every species and included many more anecdotal and characteristic keys to identifying South Carolina's native trees. While every attempt was made to use as many original photographs taken by Forestry Commission staff as possible, this edition could not have been completed without the wonderful contributions of many other foresters, forestry professors, naturalists, nursery providers, arborists and tree lovers around the country.

The books are \$20. To order, please contact SCFC Director of Communications & Public Information **Doug Wood** at (803) 896-8820 to place your order over the phone or dwood@scfc.gov to make arrangements to pay over the phone at a specific time.

Ag Outlook (cont. from pg. 1)

As for the cotton industry, 2021 South Carolina planted acreage was up 16% to 210,000 acres and cotton average yield is projected at 925 pounds/acre, up 15% from 2020.

Clemson Farm Business Consultant Scott Mickey addressed the corn, soybean and wheat markets. 2021 had some of the highest prices in soybeans the state had seen since 2012-13 at \$14.60, but current projections showed that price dropping for 2022 to \$12.63.

For wheat meanwhile, ending stocks in the U.S. have declined five years in a row, but due to expected increases in planted acreage, production and total supply and demand, 2022 should see a slight decrease in ending stocks.

Mickey said cost of doing business is something for the state's farmers to monitor, especially fertilizer prices. *"That's part of the things that we're concerned about as we move forward, Mickey said. "(The prices) in South Carolina are all significantly higher—fertilizer and fuel are more than double—what they were last year."*

Area Agribusiness Agent Matthew Fisher covered cow/calf cost returns for the upcoming year and said that, while the national cattle inventory had a 7-year expansion rate of 6.7%, South Carolina had exceeded it with a rate of 8% expansion, though post-2019 had been trending downward.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

PABC Members Named To Most Influential and Business Hall of Fame

Congratulations to the following PABC members for their recent honors. Harry Ott, President of South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation was named



Harry Ott



Barbara Melvin



Bob Quinn

one of *Columbia Business Monthly's* 50 Most Influential People. Mr. Ott also serves as Chairman of PABC. SC Ports Authority CEO Barbara Melvin was named to the *Charleston Business* 50 Most Influential People, and Bob Quinn, Executive Director of the SC Research Authority, was named an inductee into the Charleston Business Hall of Fame.

SC State University 1890 Receives USDA Grant to Construct High Tunnel Systems

SC State University 1890 Research & Extension received a \$450,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to increase farm viability and extend the production season of fresh locally grown crops through the construction of high tunnel systems (hoop houses).

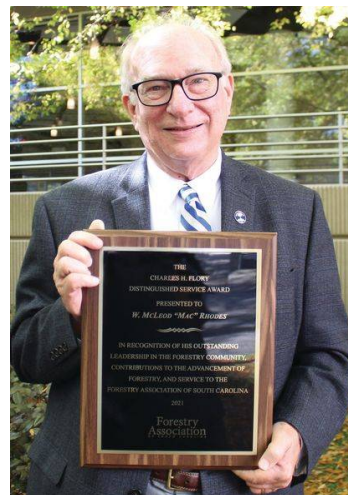
In collaboration with NRCS, SC State 1890 Extension's sustainable agriculture and natural resources program will work to establish a high tunnel demonstration site at the SC State 1890 Research & Demonstration Farm in Olar, S.C.

Research and training provided through the grant will provide economic and environmental benefits to farmers looking to enhance soil quality, reduce disease and meet the state's demand for fresher locally grown crops.

"Hoop houses will build the capacity of small-scale farmers by extending the growing season of scarce products during seasons when opportunities are often limited," said Dr. Louis Whitesides, vice president and executive director for 1890 programs. "Locally grown vegetables are not only perceived by many to be fresher and have better taste, but their sales also have indirect benefits for the environment by reducing fuel use, pollution and transportation costs, which is why our farmers must have resources like a hoop house at their disposal."

Researchers will work with sustainable agriculture and natural resources Extension agents to raise and transplant leafy greens, such as greens (turnip and mustard), specialty crops, selected fruits and other crops, including okra, beans, broccoli, onions, peppers, squash, spinach, tomatoes and eggplants. Results from the studies will identify efficient crop selections, planting arrangements and spacing to

(cont. on pg. 4, see SCSU Grant)



Congratulations to PABC member Mac Rhodes, Managing Partner- Essex Farms, for receiving the 2021 Forestry Association of SC Charles H. Flory Distinguished Service Award.

SCATE (cont. from pg. 1)

A SCATE card costs \$24 and is good for three years.

You can apply for your SCATE card starting Feb. 1, 2022 using the online portal at scatecard.com. You must apply and pay online; there is no paper application.

You'll need the following information in order to apply:

- Taxpayer ID Number – personal [SSN] or business [FEIN]
- Valid email address
- Credit card or bank account number

Questions about SCATE? Contact the South Carolina Department of Agriculture at scate@scda.sc.gov or 803-734-2210. For questions specifically about tax exemptions, you can email the South Carolina Department of Revenue at FarmExemption@dor.sc.gov. You can also read the FAQs at scatecard.com.



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CEO MESSAGE FROM RONNIE SUMMERS

Down on the Summers farm recently, my goal has been to sell my 87 year old dad's cattle. I am very fortunate and my neighbors have agreed to assist in this task by hauling them to the point of sale (stockyards and another neighbor's farm). But, what I was not expecting was the family bull's lack of cooperation. During my effort to load him, he ran over me and would have gotten me again if my 62 year old reactions had been any slower. On top of all that he broke through a new panel, and I still have to go through the process of trying to load him again.

Why is our PABC CEO telling us all this you are asking? Well, I will assure you that I have always valued our farmers and those working in forestry, but after that experience my appreciation for these hard working, persistent individuals has grown exponentially. We often take for granted what our farmers and forestry folks endure for us to enjoy the best food and fiber in the world. There are real risks (physical, financial, emotional, etc) that exists and sometimes it just takes experiences like mine to cause you to refocus on how valuable our SC agribusinesses really are. Thank you so much for those that work with livestock, poultry, crops, timber management and all phases of forestry processing! Collectively we all represent the state's largest industry AGRIBUSINESS, and we should remain very proud of that fact.

The new year is off to a fast, positive start and your PABC staff is using the information and ideas our Board of Directors shared at our fall strategic planning session to focus on providing the strongest support our organization can to the agriculture, forestry and rural communities of our state. Already in 2022 the farm and forestry groups are engaged in a very active schedule in order to grow agribusiness within South Carolina, and PABC has been directly involved in these efforts. Given all these strong efforts, SC AGRIBUSINESS will no doubt remain the state's number 1 industry for years to come!

New PABC Member Robert Smith Created Family Farm Financial to Keep the Family in the Farm



Robert Smith

Robert began his career with family-owned Orangeburg Foods in 1994. He became General Manager in 1997 and implemented a growth strategy that ultimately led to a successful sale of the agribusiness in 2014. Since then, Robert has worked with other agribusiness families to help them achieve their goals, develop succession plans, and avoid the pitfalls many family agribusinesses face.

In 2021, Robert partnered with Waypoint Strategic Advisors to launch Family Farm Financial. (Waypoint has 45 years of experience serving independent business owners, their families, and communities.)

Family Farm Financial pursues a single purpose; to protect and increase the wealth of multiple generations of farming families. Robert and his team know every family is unique. That's why they take a personalized approach to helping every family they serve answer a resounding "Yes!" to these three questions:

- Will your family realize its full potential?
- Will your agribusiness thrive for generations to come?
- Will your future be what you desire and deserve?

Robert says, "Ultimately for me, success is helping create a world that cherishes and rewards farming families for their values, contribution, and constancy."

SCSU Grant (cont. from pg. 3)

maximize crop production in high tunnel systems.

In addition to the anticipated research and construction of high tunnels, SC State 1890 and NRCS will coordinate and promote various statewide outreach programs and activities for small-scale farmers and will also work with county agents to develop a South Carolina High Tunnel System Technical Manual. Simplified for all ages, the manual will provide a wealth of knowledge on the best practices for operating and managing a high tunnel.

The three-year grant will cover expenses needed for an agronomy specialist and student assistant to monitor crops and conduct data collection, as well as provide funding for the supplies and equipment needed to construct and operate three high tunnel systems on the farm.

For more information about the high tunnel management program, contact Dr. Joshua Idassi, state program leader for sustainable agriculture and natural resources, at jidassi@scsu.edu.