



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association Turn Row Talk

Spring Issue 2024

Volume 34

A Message from the Executive Director Denise Wright

I hope all of you are gearing up for what will be an exceptional growing season! Mr. Groundhog really missed the mark this go-round. As I type this, it's April Fool's Day, and we planted our first corn on the research farm today, as well as MG 3.5 soybeans in a trial.

I've included a couple pics from the Rice Consultant of the Year (RCOY) event where our own **Rusty Elston** received this very prestigious award. I couldn't be more proud that one of our own has once again been recognized among the elite! I was so honored to sit at their table with he and his lovely wife, my friend, Karen, and also to have dinner with them, along with Rice Farming's Carroll Smith, and our very gracious Corteva hosts! THANKS to Rice Farming Magazine and Corteva for continuing this tradition.



Rusty graciously accepts the 2023 RCOY award from Corteva's Malori Lansing at the Peabody Memphis on February 29th, 2024.

Rusty Elston gives thanks and credit to those who helped him along the way in his consulting career.



Rusty with mentor, Dr. Grady Coburn at the 2023 RCOY ceremony.



Dr. Ronnie Levy, Louisiana Rice Specialist, recipient of the 2023 Rice Industry Award, nominated Rusty for this award, but was unable to attend the ceremony in Memphis. Ronnie sent a note to be read at the award ceremony...***"Not enough can be said about Rusty's dedication to the rice industry. He strives to always provide the most current and best recommendations to his producers. Making critical decisions in a timely manner can be challenging, but making the right decisions can be very rewarding. His producers have been rewarded with his knowledge and his talents. Saving producers money while increasing their yields keeps him in high demand. The one thing that can be said of Rusty is that he always goes above and beyond to make the best recommendations every morning and every afternoon of every single day during the entire season."***

Rusty, congratulations again on receiving this very deserving award! **Rusty Elston, Rice Consultant of the Year!!!**

As I wrap up this newsletter and get ready to email it, it is April 21st, we've received rain showers, and the low temps are forecasted to be in the low to mid 40's the next couple days! We're past Easter and still getting cool snaps! My confidence in Punxsutawney Phil is over!!! Wishing everyone a



THE FUNDAMENTAL DUTY OF MANKIND IS TO FEED THE WORLD....

Thomas Jefferson once said, "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands."

The American farmer produces the safest and most abundant supply of food in the world. How many people have food on their table simply by the fact that these men and women have lived and excelled in their fields? More to the point, what would our world be like without them?

According to the latest World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates reports, we are continuing to consume more wheat, rice, and cotton than we produce... supply versus demand. And most of the other commodities are very close to the same. Additionally, with continued growth in the consumption of pork and chicken, our need to increase grain production continues to rise at an accelerated pace. And to further complicate things, there is a growing demand for green bio energy.

Food vs Fuel; limited supply; growing demand; growing energy consumption, and a world in transition.

Our world is indeed getting hungry. It is simply not enough to be a good farmer. We must be innovative. We must push the envelope of science and technology. We must push ourselves to overachieve so that millions of people will not go to bed hungry. We have seen the face of hunger and it abounds across the world.

The fundamental duty of mankind is to feed the world.

A few weeks ago, I was in Cuba. It is a nation desperately struggling to feed its own people. We were there on a diplomatic mission funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and approved by the State Department. Seven State Departments of Agriculture saw first hand what it was like there, helping us to understand the economy in Cuba and the changes happening in their Government.

I was the only one that had made this trip previously, in 2016. The things we discussed in 2016 were being implemented. Eighty percent of the agricultural land is now in private hands by usufruct or outright ownership. Roughly half of the arable land is being cultivated. There are more than 400,000 individual farmers and 390 cooperatives as they continue to move into a market economy.

However, they have no fertilizer, no herbicides, no pesticides, and no farming equipment. The faces of hunger increase, as ration cards for government foods are being decreased. And yet, everywhere we went, the Cuban people were eager to feed us, finishing our meals indulgently with coffee and sweets.

One of our trips was to a privately owned farmers cooperative. They had worm gardens to create nitrogen for their vegetables. They were pulling a turning plow with two bulls. The head of the co-op invited us to join him for lunch. The meal included fresh salad from the garden, rice and beans, fresh fruit, and a baked chicken leg quarter. They offered us more rice, beans, and chicken in one meal than they eat in an entire week.

We realized the sacrifices being made to feed us a portion size that would be considered a routine meal in the United States. And it did not escape my attention when during the meal, the head of the co-op discretely passed his chicken to the woman sitting behind him, sharing his portion with her.

Let us not sit idly by as others need our help. Let us open our hearts and minds, not with pity, but with hope and enthusiasm about what we can do to help. Let us lead as others have led before us. Let us not simply live for today, but rather strive to achieve greater things and truly make a difference. And let us always remember that the fundamental duty of mankind is to feed the world.

Mike Strain, DVM

Commissioner

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

(225) 922-1233



Welcome New LACA Members!!!

Associate

**Braxton Batte
Andrew Lanie**

Sustaining

**Aquarius Farm Controls
ICL Growing Solutions
Rovensa Next
Vestaron**

Refresher on Certified Agricultural Consultant Record Keeping Requirements

Blaine Viator, Ph.D., CPCC-I, CPCC-R

In planning the program for the last LATMC, several of our members asked for a review of the record keeping requirements for Agricultural Consultants. Most of these requirements can be found in the **Louisiana Administrative Code as Title 7, Part XXIII (§2105)**, often referred to as the “Rules and Regs”, or in **Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 3, Chapter 20 (§3246)**:

Title 7:

<https://www.doa.la.gov/media/gtvlt15/07.pdf>

LA R.S. Title 3, Chapter 20(§3246):

<https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=86207>

A. Every recommendation made by an agricultural consultant shall be in duplicate original and shall be dated and signed by the agricultural consultant.

B. Each recommendation made by an agricultural consultant shall include the following:

1. the name and address of person purchasing the consultant's services;
2. the location, including the crop, for which the recommendation is made;
3. the pesticide or pesticides recommended;
4. the recommended rate of application;
5. a brief statement as to the reasons for the recommendation; and
6. the date of when the recommendation is given.

C. The pesticide recommendation shall be given to the purchaser of the consultant services or his designee and a copy shall be maintained in the records of the agricultural consultant.

D. The commissioner, or his duly authorized representative, shall be permitted access to such records upon reasonable request.

Title 3, Chapter 20, 3:3246 Part G states an additional requirement that Agricultural Consultants must retain records of recommendations **for a minimum of three (3) years.**

For more specific questions regarding these requirements, please contact the **Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences:**

(225) 925-3763

pesticides@ldaf.state.la.us

Crazy Top in Corn

Boyd Padgett

Recent rains and flooding provided conditions favorable for crazy top in corn. Candidate corn fields are poorly drained and areas close to ditches that extended beyond the normal banks into adjacent field borders during rain events. However, excessive rains will also create conditions favorable for crazy top development. In most cases only small areas of the field are affected, but there always could be exceptions.

Crazy top is caused by the soilborne pathogen *Sclerophthora macrospora*. Disease development is favored when young corn (most susceptible from seedling to V5) is subjected to flooding and saturated soils for 24 to 48 hours. The pathogen infects the corn through the corn growing point. Pooling water in the whorl provides optimum conditions for infection. Typical symptoms will be twisted and deformed leaves, deformed leaves where the tassel should be, and usually no ear develops (Figures 1 and 2). Symptoms will not be evident until later in the growing season, usually during the reproductive stages.

Genetic resistance has not been identified in hybrids and seed treatments are not effective for crazy top management. Fortunately, this disease is usually not yield limiting.

Figure 1. Crazy Top



Figure 2. Crazy Top In the tassel



EPA Publishes Update on Herbicide Strategy Progress

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is releasing an update to its draft Herbicide Strategy, which is part of the Agency's plan to improve how it meets its Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations. The purpose of this update is to describe some improvements that EPA plans to make as it continues finalizing the strategy to increase flexibility and improve ease of implementation while still protecting federally listed species. The Agency expects to publish the final strategy in August 2024.

The draft strategy, which EPA released for public comments in July 2023, describes whether, how much, and where mitigations may be needed to protect listed species from agricultural uses of conventional herbicides. The goal is for EPA to use the strategy to proactively determine mitigations for registration and registration review actions for herbicides even before EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) formally complete the lengthy ESA determination on whether an herbicide has effects on a listed species. By adopting these early mitigations, EPA can begin protecting listed species while FWS and NMFS are making their ESA determinations.

The strategy itself does not impose any requirements or restrictions on pesticide use. Rather, EPA will use the strategy to inform mitigations for new active ingredient registrations and registration review of conventional herbicides. Thus, for any herbicide, mitigations from the strategy will not become effective until EPA adopts labels (following public comment) for that herbicide as part of a new active ingredient registration or registration review decision.

EPA received extensive comments on the draft strategy, with many reiterating the importance of protecting listed species from herbicides. Commenters also identified concerns with specific aspects of the draft strategy and suggested revisions. EPA plans to make a number of improvements to the draft based on this feedback, with the primary changes falling into three categories.

- **Making the strategy easier to understand.** Many commenters noted the complexity of the strategy to determine the amount of mitigation a label requires for a particular pesticide—up to nine points of mitigation. In response, EPA is simplifying its approach, such as by using four tiers—none, low, medium, high—to describe the amount of mitigation that may be needed for each herbicide. EPA also plans to create educational materials that concisely explain the four-tier mitigation approach.
- **Increasing flexibility for growers to implement the mitigation measures in the strategy.** EPA expects to expand its mitigation measures, especially for specialty crops such as cherries and mint, to include new measures such as erosion barriers, reservoir tillage, and soil carbon amendments. EPA is also working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other organizations to identify other measures to add to the mitigation menu that can reduce pesticide runoff and erosion. In May 2024, for example, the EPA and USDA will host a workshop with agricultural stakeholders to identify other possible measures to add to the menu.
- **Reducing the amount of mitigation that may be needed** when growers have already adopted voluntary practices to reduce pesticide runoff or where runoff potential is lower due to geography. For example, in areas of the country with flat lands or minimal precipitation where runoff potential is low, growers may need less or no additional measures to use agricultural herbicides, compared to what is currently in the draft strategy. EPA is also considering whether growers could meet any necessary mitigation requirements if they participate in agricultural conservation programs or work with qualified experts to design and implement mitigation measures.

In addition to these types of improvements, EPA is also working on other changes to the Herbicide Strategy and how it is implemented. For many listed species, the maps used in the draft strategy for determining where mitigation measures would apply are often too broad, covering areas not needed to conserve the species. EPA is working with FWS and others to develop a process for refining maps for hundreds of species. This process could then be used by applicants for registration actions and by others to produce draft maps for the agencies to consider. Through this work, EPA expects that the land area subject to the pesticide restrictions under the final strategy could shrink for many species.

EPA appreciates the thoughtful perspectives from multiple stakeholders on the draft strategy and other ESA efforts. EPA continues to consider the public comments, meet with stakeholders, and collaborate with FWS, USDA, and state agencies. EPA expects to publish the final strategy by August 30, 2024.

The full update, along with additional details regarding the strategy, are available in the public docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0365 at www.regulations.gov, and on [EPA's website](#).



2024 LACA Scholarships

Rajat Pruthi
Louisiana State University
Doctoral Scholarship



Logan Vallee
Louisiana State University
Masters Scholarship



Doctoral scholarship sponsors, Grady and Barbara Coburn, Pest Management Enterprises with Rajat Pruthi, scholarship recipient.



Kindall Tonn
McNeese State University
Undergraduate Scholarship, sponsored by
Ray and Dorothy Young

Stephen Austin of Louisiana Land Bank, sponsor of the Masters scholarship with recipient, Logan Vallee at the 2024 Louisiana Agricultural Technology and Management Conference.

**Ray and Dorothy Young
Endowed Student Award**

David Galo, LSU College of Agriculture

Baton Rouge, LA

I am honored to be the recipient of the prestigious scholarship, the “Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Crop Integrated Pest Management” offered by the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association, and Louisiana State University College of Agriculture.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology (PPCP). I am working on a multi-state project that aims to meet the needs of stakeholders that are experiencing severe economic losses due to root-knot nematode damage. My research project involves the identification



David Galo, recipient of the Ray and Dorothy Young Endowed Assistantship in Field Crop Integrated Pest Management pictured with Dorothy Young and Michael Salassi

and characterization of sweet potato genotypes with resistance to two root-knot nematodes, *Meloidogyne enterolobii* and *M. incognita*. To date, my findings have led to the identification of several sweet potato genotypes with resistance to both root-knot nematodes, that can be used in combination with other disease management strategies. Given the potential positive impact of these results for the global sweet potato industry, these findings have been shared with other plant scientists, as well as various stakeholders at several meetings in Alaska, Colorado, Louisiana, North Carolina, and internationally, including Cairo, Egypt.

After finishing my Ph.D. program, my goal is to embark on a career in the agricultural industry sector, aiming to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and its practical application by farmers, and to bring efficient, environmental sound solutions that benefit everyone. With the major challenges that humanity faces due to population growth, agricultural solutions combined with agronomic support and services to enhance farmer productivity and profitability are needed. Consequently, I would



David Galo giving some highlights about his research program during the award ceremony at the Louisiana Agricultural Technology and Management Conference sponsored by the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association in Marksville, LA

like to be like to become involved in this process and play a positive role in devising solutions to tackle these societal challenges.

In the pursuit of a career as a research scientist in the agricultural industry, my desire is that my professional and academic experiences will prepare me to lead the way in my overall interest to help growers. Assisting farmers in finding the best strategies to maximize their profits and minimize their risk, both environmentally and financially, will continue to motivate me to achieve this career.

Mr. Ray

Ambassador for God, Family, Country, and Agriculture

Roger Carter

Words can never describe how many of us feel about the loss of our dear friend, Mr Ray Young. I'll try to describe what I felt were the most important things in his life. Mr Ray was, first & foremost, a Christian man who valued his family as the second-most important thing in his life. He was a veteran, a life-long Patriot. He also was a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Many of us saw and heard how much he loved Ms Dorothy when at an open mic Saturday morning at an NAICC annual meeting in Washington, DC., in 1998. Mr Ray stood and confessed that he had something personal he wanted to share with our group; that he loved Ms Dorothy dearly, but felt he did not show it often enough, yet he knew how much she did for him as a consultant's and a farmer's wife. Before he sat down there was not a dry eye in our group attending the meeting that morning. His talk left us all leaving there with each having a greater appreciation of our respective spouses.

Mr Ray showed his dedication to his country as a pilot and a veteran. A plane from his squadron is on display at the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola.

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His fourth love was agriculture and there are too many of his accomplishments to list them all. He was a mentor to many, both farmers and consultants regarding conservation tillage.

Fifth, were his friends. It was and is an honor to be a friend with the Youngs. Lise' and I had the honor of traveling with them many times from 1995 - 2005. I was once asked by a journalist to describe the two of them; she wrote, "Roger said that they walked in unison like two Georgia mules." What I actually said was "they can be as stubborn as two Georgia mules." If Mr Ray told Ms Dorothy that she could not go out on the beach with Barbara Coburn, Martha McLawhorn, and Lise', Ms Dorothy would do it anyway. If Ms Dorothy told Mr Ray, "Now, Ray, you know you should not drive & talk on the cell phone at the same time", Mr Ray would do it anyway. Traveling with the Youngs was better than anything we would see at whatever meeting/conference we may be attending. And, Mr Ray dragged me around DC trying to break my recessive tact gene, but had little success. He often used my weakness for his benefit. I've got many stories to prove it, but if you were honored to be Mr Ray's friend, he'd stick with you through thick and thin.

No words can describe our feelings for Mr Ray. He was a true Southern gentleman, a man of the last great generation and, yet, a man decades ahead of his time. 1. Christian, 2. Family man, 3. Patriot, 4. Agriculture's greatest ambassador, and 5. Friend to thousands. Lise' and I pray our grandsons can grow up to be just like him; and our granddaughters, like Ms Dorothy.

With love & respect, Roger & Lise' Carter

NAICC in Washington D.C. and the EPA Endangered Species Workplan

Hank Jones

In 2011, a lawsuit filed in Federal Court by environmental groups accused EPA of being in violation of Section 7 of The Endangered Species Act (ESA) by not consulting USFWS prior to registering a specific list of pesticides. EPA lost this case, with the Federal Court mandating (2018) EPA meet specific procedural requirements for registering pesticides or risk losing registration of those products. In response, EPA developed the "ESA Workplan" to address guidelines to be used to harmonize pesticide registration and applications to protect threatened and listed species and other non-target species.

The "ESA Workplan" represents a policy shift for EPA regarding pesticide registration by focusing not just on current FIFRA standards but also on endangered species and non-target species. The Workplan also offers procedural insight into how EPA will identify potential risks and offers interim mitigation tools to reduce/eliminate pesticide exposure to threatened and listed species and critical habitat. In the event EPA considers a listed species or critical habitat will be potentially or adversely impacted by a pesticide, they will enter consultation with USFWS to better determine the pesticide impacts and develop further

mitigations, if needed, for pesticide labels. Henceforth, there will be a "marriage" of FIFRA and ESA for pesticide registration.

To voice concerns on behalf of independent crop consultants, members of the NAICC traveled to Washington D.C. in March to participate in the annual "Crawfish Boil on the Hill" and visit legislators, federal agencies, and agricultural related groups. I currently serve on the consultants sub-committee for governmental affairs and was assigned to visit US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), EPA, USDA: Office of Pest Management Programs, National Cotton Council, Senate Ag Committee (Conservation and Pesticide sub-committee staff), Speaker Mike Johnson (LA), Congresswomen Julia Letlow (LA) & Nikki Budzinski (IL), and Congressman Jimmy Panetta (CA). NAICC focused interactions with policy makers and regulators in D.C. on the topic of EPA's "ESA Workplan." (As a reminder, Dr. Kelly Tindall from EPA and Dr. Don Parker from the National Cotton Council introduced this topic to LACA two years ago during the LATMC).

NAICC visits to USFWS, EPA, and USDA: OPMP concentrated on voicing questions and concerns relating to the "ESA Workplan" and voicing NAICC's willingness to cooperate in developing implementable mitigations for producers and applicators to understand and follow. I was honored to join three others to NAICC's first meeting with USFWS. Specifically, we met with the Endangered Species Consultation Branch to discuss the role ag consultants have in recommending and stewarding pesticide use on farms. NAICC also offered to help USFWS better understand the role of technology (See and Spray, Prescription Sprays, and Variable Rate Sprays) in possibly reducing pesticide exposure to listed species and critical habitat. Of note, the USFWS Branch Lead for Endangered Species Consultations, Craig Aubrey, is from Lafayette. He encouraged me to communicate the need for Louisiana consultants to develop a working relationship with USFWS biologists in Louisiana for posterity.

NAICC held three meetings with multiple divisions of EPA. I attended a meeting with the Biological and Economic Analysis (BEAD) and Environmental Fate and Effects Division (EFED) to discuss the Draft Herbicide and Insecticide Strategies. The "Draft Strategies" are a component of the ESA Workplan that will serve as the framework for developing mitigation practices to prevent the off-target movement (erosion, water runoff, and drift) of pesticides. The final Herbicide Strategy will be available later this year and the Draft Insecticide Strategy will be released for comment as soon as July. NAICC asked the scientists to better define terminology in the documents and to recognize the impact certain mitigations being suggested in the Draft Herbicide Strategy could have to IPM programs for both weeds and insects. Our discussions were met with interest from EPA scientists, as they see ease of implementation as a goal of the ESA Workplan.

Although this article is brief, I hope the complex process of future pesticide labeling is at least introduced. Consultants will soon enter a frontier we've long feared. The alteration of pesticide applications and increased regulation

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WILL take place, regardless of political party change in Washington DC. EPA is working to ensure we keep, in some form, the pesticides we currently use, but also know the risk leniency could mean to a label being vacated by the Federal Courts. From my interactions over the last 2-3 years with EPA, they are very approachable and willing to hear our voice since we are INDEPENDENT. I encourage everyone reading this article to research the ESA WORKPLAN and DRAFT HERBICIDE STRATEGY to gain insight into this topic. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any questions. The LACA Gov't Affairs Committee is working to secure excellent speakers for LATMC 2025 to better address the topic for our association.

For information on membership in NAICC, contact Allison Jones at allisonjones@naicc.org or Denise Wright at denise@laca1.org or go to www.naicc.org

NAICC offers a certification program for its members. You can obtain a CPCC-I (Certified Professional Crop Consultant-Independent) and/or CPCC-R (Certified Professional Crop Consultant Researcher). On top of your state certification with the LDAF, this certification can further enhance your credibility in your profession.



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