

Agricultural Economics Program

The Agecon Informer

Department of Agricultural Science 601.877.6525 Fall, October 2009 Volume 6, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

US Economy: Recession or Recovery?

Maurice C. Allen: US 1 Mission in Zambia

Obama's Health Plan 2 – Cause of Economic culture war?

Mississippi Faces Ma- 2 jor Budget Cuts

Direct Marketing of Agricultural Products through Farmers' Market.

Summer Internships 4

New Member of Faculty.

Join the Agribusiness & Economics Club (ABEC)

Meetings are held 1st & 3rd Wednesday at 12:15 P.M.

Agricultural Science
Building Room 14

US Economy: Recession or Recovery?

Contributor: Margaret Y. Honutse



Several months have gone by since our economy was declared to be experiencing full scale recession. My main concern since our discussion in the last issue of the *Ag-Econ Informer*

has been how the core fabric of our economy is coping and whether or not the economic recovery is anywhere on the horizon. The US economy was declared to be in recession because the gross domestic product (GDP), which is the most comprehensive measure of the growth of any economy, decreased for two consecutive quarters. However, the recent update of the GDP, indicated that while the economic conditions have improved we are still in a recession. According to the Bureau of Economic analysis, real gross domestic product decreased at an annual rate of 0.7 percent in the second guarter of 2009. The decrease in real GDP in the second quarter primarily reflected negative contributions from private invent-Continued on page 3

In loving Memory of Dr. Liang Chew Huam Contributor: Ikeyonia Harper



Dr. Liang Huam dedicated twenty three (23) years of service to Alcorn State University, preparing countless numbers of students for employment and graduate/

professional school. Dr. Huam was awarded numerous competitive grants and developed the Ag. Econ/International Agricultural curricula. He worked diligently in preparing high school students for college matriculation. His students are now employed throughout the nation and abroad in various government and private industries. Many students revere and credit him for much of their success. Dr. Liang Chew Huam, will appropriately be remembered for his quiet, sweet spirit, high morals, humility, professionalism and positive philosophy toward life.

Maurice C. Allen: US Mission in Zambia

Contributor: Margaret Y. Honutse

Maurice C. Allen is a member

of US Peace Corps on mission in Zambia, Africa. He is a graduate of Alcorn where he earned a bachelors degree in Agricultural Economics, International option. He earned a fellowship and completed his masters degree at Southern Illinois University. While studying at Alcorn, and having participated in several international edu-

cational excursions, Maurice became especially interested in working for organizations that support economic development, particularly in developing countries. He would eventually like to become an Ambassador for the United States some day. On one of the international trips sponsored by the Ag. Econ program to Guyana in 2005, students and staff were addressed by the US Ambassador to Guyana and his entire senior staff.

Maurice was so impressed that from that moment he said he wanted to work with the Peace Corp. He earnestly pursued that dream and on July 23rd year (2009), he was sent on a mission to Zambia, a southern African country.

In my interview with Maurice he said that upon arriving in Zambia, the culture shock was hard but because of his love for Africa and his passion for

Continued on page 3

Obama's Health Plan - Cause of Economic Culture War?

Contributor: Margaret Y. Honutse

Being used to the traditional way of taking care of our health problems, most Americans are very much against Barack Obama's plan that seems progressive or liberal. Examining the proposed health care plan and policies, it can be described as one that will equita-



bly ensure that every American has access to good quality medical care services

The Obama administration is proposing to redesign our health system to reduce inefficiency and waste, improve health care quality and drive down costs for families and individuals. Importantly, millions that were formerly uninsured should have access to healthcare. It is hoped that patients will re-

ceive and providers deliver the best possible care.

It seems, however, that even though the broad outline of the plan is good for the country as a whole, leaders in both the House and Senate and many other Americans have voiced their opposition. Their main argument is that the Obama administration plans to establish a government-run health care entity, which will give the Federal Government full control over health care.

After a summer of often-rowdy debates over the proposed healthcare overhaul, in which some conservatives accused the President of socialism, Obama's approval ratings have declined and voters seem to be losing faith in the President.

So the question then is why are people afraid of what appears to be progressive changes? Are we really having an economic culture war over policies that could actually relieve us of the burden of our current health care dilemma? Recall that America is the only country in the



industrialized world that does not provide full health care for all its citizens. I cannot understand the fear of 'meaningful government intervention such as in this case to set up a public health insurance, especially to help the poor. Call it whatever you want I call it humanity, helping those who cannot afford what they actually deserve as citizens. Maybe we should put aside our political affiliations and take a closer look at what the enactment of the new equitable and all encompassing health plan could do for all Americans



Mississippi Faces Major Budget Cuts

Contributor: Ikeyonia Harper

Governor Haley Barbour announced that Medicaid and public schools will likely be two of the many programs that will be losing money through state budget cuts.

Governor Barbour earlier cut 2% from the \$5 billion state budget in November, 2008. He however, chose not to cut money from Medicaid, a government health insurance program for the needy. He also spared the Mississippi Adequate Education Program, a complex formula that provides most of the money for elementary and secondary schools. Barbour commented that the reason for the second-round of budget cuts is the weak economy and the sharp fall in tax collection which is eroding state revenues.

CDC predicts more cases of H1N1 as school starts

Contributor: Ikeyonia Harper

The Center for Disease Control has predicted that there will be more cases of H1N1 (Swine Flu) as more students return to school from the summer and as the fall and winter approach. The area that has so far been affected the most is the Southeastern region of the United States. Dr. Thomas Frieden, the director of the CDC stated that the H1N1 virus is here to stay and that in fact, it never went away. The good news

is that so far, everything that we've seen, both in this country and abroad, indicates that the virus has not changed to become more deadly. That means that although it may affect lots of people, most people will not be severely ill." Dr. Frieden stressed that the flu is generally "unpredictable."

A few symptoms of the H1N1 virus are: fever, cough, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue. Some people that have been affected with the



virus have reported cases of diarrhea and vomiting. We encourage you to wash your hands often and maintain a healthy immune system. In order to protect yourself and your community, stay informed about the virus.

US Economy: Recession or Recovery (cont'd from pg.1)

Contributor: Magaret Y. Honutse

tory investment, nonresidential and omy has shown signs of emerging from a good sign.

The answer I believe is yes. The econ- to be stabilizing. Recent economic re-

residential fixed investment, personal long recession but no one is sure consumption expenditures (PCE) and whether the recovery will be "V" or "U" exports that were partly offset by posi- shaped. Many Economists suggest that tive contributions from federal govern- the relatively small contraction in the ment spending and state and local gov- economy in the second quarter is an ernment spending. The much smaller indication that the recession will likely decrease in real GDP in the second end sometime in the 4th guarter of quarter than in the first was obviously a 2009. Many financial analysts also believe that conditions are set for a re-So, does the second quarter GDP bound in the third quarter. Leading indata demonstrate that we are making dicators of economic activity are pointreal progress in ending this recession? ing up, and the housing sector appears

ports show the housing slump, which helped trigger the financial crisis, and the decline in manufacturing have eased. As more Federal stimulus dollars hit the street, we should make headway in improving the difficult employment and financial conditions in many hardhit regions of the country. The unfortunate Recession has clearly been more severe than previously estimated but it sets the stage for a strong recovery. There are signs of stabilization in a lot of areas of the economy, so the worst I think is definitely behind us.

Direct Marketing of Agricultural Produce Through Farmers' Markets

Contributor: Ikeyonia Harper

With the increase in agricultural produce imported into the U.S., large commercial growers are taking a second look at high-return marketing outlets.



Farmers that have land of 100 acres or less are starting to become very popular.

The purpose of Farmers' Markets is to provide customers with a fresh and unique product that

can be sold for a smaller price than at supermarkets.

Customers come to the markets to support local agriculture and to meet the farmers or growers of the food or products that they purchase. There are three Farmers' Markets that are located in the area: Adams County Farmers' Market, which is operated by Alcorn State University, Claiborne County Farmers' Market, and the Mississippi Farmers' Market, located in Jackson, MS. We encourage you to patronize

our local farmers markets!



Maurice C. Allen: US Mission in Zambia (cont'd from pg.1)

Contributor: Margaret Y. Honutse

the job he has settled in very well, learning the local language, meeting the people and appreciating the culture.

Thus far, he has found Zambia to be a rather peaceful and beautiful African country. He was actually surprised to see that Lusaka, the capital of Zambia and where he lives with his host family was just like any big city in the United States. The people, he said are very welcoming, friendly and warm. He was also astonished about how much Zambians love country music.

He explained that his host family adores him and treats him like his own family does. His attachment to them has grown so much that their relationship will be long lasting. "It will be hard to leave them at the end of my assignment" he explained. "I have learnt a lot from them." He has so far

"I have learned a lot from my host family"

learned to cook some African dishes, wash his own clothes manually and is already fluent in the local language.

Maurice's assignment will be to assist local farmers in producing farm-

raised fish efficiently and profitably. When asked what the most memorable experience has been so far, he said it was when he had to teach the local farmers about the modern techniques of efficient fish farming. The emotions these lessons brought out of the farmers told him how important learning is to them. It motivated him to focus and learn their language so that he will be able to teach other skills.

Maurice's message to all readers is "not to think you will never use the things you are being taught in class today because you might find yourself in a situation where you will need it."

Summer Internships

Contributor: Teddrick Hargrave



Just like every other student, I had plans for the summer holidays, but when I was presented with the opportunity to participate in the 2009 'Summer Internship Program', I knew the experience would be worth more than the original plans I had.

Though challenging at the start, once I started working and was in full flow, the whole experience became meaningful and exciting. In the end, I must say that it was a most fulfilling project. It undoubtedly gave me the experiential learning opportunity that I so dearly needed. I was able to interact with farmers from surrounding counties (Jefferson, Claiborne, Franklin, etc.) and was able to help them solve some of their basic everyday farm related problems. It was an especially rewarding experience for me when I saw the look of appreciation in the eyes of the farmers to whom we provided assistance. I am very grateful for the opportunity which was provided by the Agricultural Economics program. It could not have been a better summer holiday for me!



This past summer I was offered an internship by the Agricultural Economics Program to work with the Natchez Farmers' Market which is supported by the Alcorn Extension Program. During the internship, I served as a marketing assistant and gained much knowledge pertaining to farmers, consumers, produce and marketing strategies. I was responsible for providing a weekly calendar for the Marketing Coordinator, preparing creative output such as flyers and brochures, maintaining contact with vendors and producers, and maintaining accurate inventory. I also provided technical assistance to the farmers and vendors, sell produce and ensured that consumers were satisfied.

The internship gave me the opportunity to put the knowledge and skills I learned in the classroom to great use. I gained a practical understanding of marketing concepts and strategies. I also recognized the value-added processes producers/farmers used to

enhance their products in order to generate greater profitability. Again, thanks for this wonderful experience provided by the Ag-econ program.



My internship with the USDA Rural Development Agency was a wonderful experience. It was an honor to help people in the rural areas improve themselves by providing loans to facilitate their housing needs. My duties at the Agency were to meet and greet the clients, make direct phone calls, discuss credit reports, assist in pre-qualifying for loans, meet selected clients on housing lots, inspect houses and discuss various aspects of loans with clients. I enjoyed the opportunity to work with people; many of whom are economically less fortunate but proud and very friendly. I learned a lot from them. At the end of the internship the Interim Area Director Mrs. Thelma Glasco and Regional Manger, Mr. Roger Roberson, also a recent graduate of Alcorn's Agricultural Economics program, offered me the position as a Loan Specialist with the Yazoo MS, Rural Development Agency. Thus far, I am enjoying the job immensely. Many thanks to the Agricultural Economics program for the extraordinary opportunity!

New Member of Faculty: Dr. Alyona Funtikova

Dr. Alyona Funtikova is a new member of faculty in the Department of Agriculture. She is involved in teaching and research in the Agricultural Economics program. Dr. Funtikova holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and Finance. She hails from Voronezh State University, Russia where she taught Agricultural Taxation. She currently teaches Agricultural Statistics, Quantitative Analysis and Resource Development.



Dr. Alyona Funticova

We wish her a happy and productive stay at Alcorn!!

Department of Agriculture 1000 ASU Drive, 750 Alcorn State, MS 39096-7500

Newsletter Staff:

Dr. Wesley Whittaker Program Coordinator, Advisor and Editor 601.877.3975

> Teddrick Hargrave, Editor/Contributor Research Associate, Agricultural Economics

> Veronica Igbokwe, Editor Research Associate, Agricultural Economics

Margaret Y. Honutse, Contributor Graduate student, Agricultural Economics

Ikeyonia Harper, Contributor Graduate Student, Agricultural Economics Suggestions and comments:

Wesley Whittaker Email: wwesley@alcorn.edu **Teddrick Hargrave** Email: thargrave@alcorn.edu

Ikeyonia Harper Email: ikeyonia@yahoo.com

Margaret Y. Honutse Email: elemeluv@yahoo.com