

DRAFT CONFERENCE FORMAT

32nd Small Farmers Conference
September 25-27, 2023
Sheraton Flowood The Refuge Hotel & Conference Center
2200 Refuge Blvd.
Flowood, Mississippi 39232

Theme: “*Sustaining Agriculture Practices for Small Farmers through the Impact of Climate Change*”

Monday, September 25, 2023

7:00 a.m. Vendors and Exhibitors—Grand Ballroom C

8:00 a.m. Conference Registration Opens—Hotel Event Area

10:00 a.m. Pre- Conference Session—Grand Ballroom A:

Informational session on Federal and State agricultural program assistance for landowners, small farmers and new and beginning farmers.

Presiding: Chuck Lea, *Outreach Coordinator, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Jackson, MS*

Welcome and Conference Overview:

Michael Trusclair, *USDA 1890 Liaison and Acting National Outreach Coordinator, Alcorn State University*

Agricultural Leaders: USDA and Mississippi Agencies Panel Representatives:

- Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce- Andy Gipson, *Commissioner of Agriculture*
- Farm Service Agency- Thaddeus Fairley, *State Executive Director*
- Natural Resource Conservation Service- Kurt Readus, *State Conservationist*
- Risk Management Agency-Roddrick Bell, *Director*
- Rural Development- Dr. Lacari Mosley, *Rural Business Program Director*
- Mississippi Forestry Commission- Orlando Ellerby, *Outreach Officer Region 3*

Future Outlook for Agriculture:

Representative De'Keither A. Stamps, District 66th, Mississippi House of Representatives

12:30 p.m. Grab & Go Box Lunch

1:30-3:30 p.m. 1st Plenary Session—Grand Ballroom A & B

Presiding: John Coleman, Farm Manager & Business Management Training Officer, Mound Bayou Research Farm & Technology Center, Alcorn State University Extension Program

Invocation
Reverend Otis Davis
Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church,
Canton, MS

Welcome
Daniel Lane, *Director of Economic Development
City of Flowood*

Official Greetings:

Dr. Tracy M. Cook, Interim President, Alcorn State University

Ben F. Burkett, State Coordinator
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives—Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Jackson, MS

Musical Selection:
Angela Clark- Sherman
Starkville, MS

Introduction of Keynote Speaker: Dr. Dexter Wakefield I, Interim Dean and Director of Land Grant Programs, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Alcorn State University

Keynote Speaker: Mr. DeShawn Blanding, *Senior Policy Analyst, House Agriculture Committee, Washington D. C.*

Special Presentations:

The Spirit of Courage Award— Ms. Pamela Junior, *Former Director, Two Museums of Mississippi*

Honoree--Reverend Wendell H. Paris, Sr.

Recognition of Military Veteran Farmers and Ranchers
Mr. Tremell Sherman, *Outreach Specialist, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives*

3:15 p.m. Fitness Stretch & Break

3:30 p.m.

2nd Plenary Session—Grand Ballroom A & B

Facilitator: Dr. Elizabeth Myles, Director of the Mississippi Small Farm and Agribusiness Center, Alcorn State University

How to Create an Asset Protection Blueprint for Your Farm or Ranch:

Participants will gain valuable insight and practical insight strategies to protect your assets and privacy effectively. This include understanding the importance of maintaining anonymity, obtaining liability insurance, implementing equity stripping methods, separating your assets, establishing a clear distinction between your personal and business entities. Prince & Associates is a full service law firm counseling high level entrepreneurs in the area of risk management and asset protection.

Attorney Sherrie Prince, Prince & Associates, PLLC, Jackson, MS

Forestry & Climate Change:

The presentations will focus on the technical assistance to help initiate, stabilize and improve small farm forestry operations and provide strategies to increase forestry income as a result of the impact from climate change.

Presenters: Darren Beachem, *Forester and State Coordinator of Alabama State Association of Cooperatives, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund*

Corey Bacon, *Outreach Forester & Wildlife Habitat Specialist, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives*

Freddie Davis, *Forester and Director of the Rural Training & Research Center, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund*

Heifer Project International Opportunities:

The organization's mission is to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. Working worldwide with marginalized small-scale farmers, heifers provide livestock, seeds and training in sustainable crop production and animal management practices to increase income and improve nutrition. Focusing also on women's empowerment and social capital, heifer then mobilizes communities of these small-scale farmers into cooperatives and farmer associations to access inclusive market systems.

Ruth Canada, Heifer Engagement and Outreach Program Officer, Heifer Project International, Little Rock, AR

Mental Health Precautions for Farmers:

The PROMISE Initiative, Preventing Opioid Misuse in the Southeast, seeks to fight the growing opioid epidemic using a multi-phased approach to prevent prescription opioid misuse in rural Mississippi. 443 Mississippians died from an opioid-related overdose in 2020, a 124.9% increase since 2019 (MPDH, 2020). With Mississippi and the United States facing the worst increase in opioid-related deaths in recent years, the team of Extension professionals working on the PROMISE Initiative focuses on understanding all possible risk factors associated with substance misuse, mental health, and farm stress.

Dr. Mary Robinson, Project Coordinator and Extension Associate, MSU Extension Service, MSU Food Science, Nutrition, & Health Promotion

5:00 p.m. Announcements and Overview of Day Two Activities:

**6:30 p.m. NETWORKING RECEPTION
The Sheraton Hotel Greenspace**

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

7:00 a.m. Grab & Go Breakfast at Sheraton Hotel

7:45 a.m. Depart Hotel for Learning Sites

9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Agricultural Outdoor Learning Sites:

Site 1: Vegetable Production, Marketing and Drone Technology:

Participants will gain knowledge on the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) decision-making process that combines tools and strategies to identify and manage pests. IPM is a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks.

An interactive demonstration by NRCS will discuss the importance of soil health in Mississippi. In addition a live aerial Drone demonstration will highlight the need to adopt new technology.

Site Coordinators: Tremell Sherman, Kelvin King & Joe Barnes

Site 2: Livestock Production and Reproductive Management:

Artificial Insemination (AI) has a range of benefits to beef cattle farmers, such as providing access to the best genetics, supporting animal health and the safety of people who work on farms. AI enables farmers to access the best bull (male) genetics from all across the globe. Farmers want to improve the production, health traits, fertility and longevity of their beef cattle by using a balanced approach to breeding. Animal health is also improved through the use of AI. Participants will also gain knowledge on raising small ruminants and forage production.

Site Coordinators: Ralph Arrington and Ricky Johnson

Site 3: Women In Business and Entrepreneur Showcase:

Women in Business provide resources and transformations for small businesses and owners. It is specifically designed to help you grow and become more visible and have access to the support you need to take your business to the next level of success. This session will provide exclusive speaker presentations and showcase opportunities for women in business.

Site Coordinator: Rena Harrell, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Location: Sheraton Hotel Grand Ballroom A

4:00 p.m. Explore the Cultural Attractions in the tri-county area and Dinner On Your Own

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

3rd Plenary Session

7:00 a.m. Grab & Go Breakfast at Sheraton Hotel

**8:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Agriculture and Small Farm Families Session
Grand Ballroom A & B**

Presiding: Kelvin King, *Agriculture Educator,
Alcorn State University Extension Program*

Welcome Tremell Sherman, *Agriculture Outreach Specialist
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives*

8:35 a.m.—9:20 a.m. Alternative Crop Production and Marketing: *“Mushroom Cultivation on Wood Waste from Hardwood Forests”* Dr. Frank Mrema, Assistant Professor, Alcorn State University

9:25 a.m.—10:10 a.m. Keeping it in the Family: Heirs’ Property Prevention & Resolution

The Mississippi Center for Justice (The Center) is a non-profit public interest law firm whose mission is to dismantle policies that deny African-Americans and lower-income Mississippians the opportunity to advance themselves. The Center advances racial and economic justice through an approach that combines legal services with policy, advocacy, community education and media outreach. The Center partners with national, regional and community organizations to develop and implement campaigns designed to create better futures for low-income Mississippians and communities of color in the areas of educational opportunity, financial security, healthcare, affordable housing, heirs’ property and other vital issues. The Center is the only non-profit law firm providing free direct legal services to heirs’ property landowners and black farmers in Mississippi to resolve title issues and allow families to keep, protect, and utilize their land for generations to come. The Center is on the front line and committed to assisting heirs’ property landowners and black farmers with building generational wealth and maintaining their legacies.

Attorney Andrea’ Barnes, Director of the Heirs’ Property Campaign, Mississippi Center for Justice, Jackson, Mississippi

10:15 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Voices From the Field: Testimonials on agricultural and community related issues in Mississippi.

1. Dr. Shavonn Whiten, Beginning Farmer
2. Rockiell Woods, Delta Council
3. James Burch, Veteran Farmer
4. Carolyn Jones, Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance

11:05 a.m.—11:35 a.m. Farm Bill UPDATE: The Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center, Alcorn State University, April Love, Esq. Policy Analyst

FITNESS STRETCH & BREAK

11:45 a.m. Small Farmer of the Year Awards Presentation & Luncheon

Greetings

Doris Miller, Community Resource Development Educator, Alcorn State University

Extension Program

Invocation

Joe Barnes, *Agriculture Outreach Specialist,*
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Luncheon Served

Introduction of Speaker
Jerrie Jackson, 4-H Youth Educator
Alcorn State University Extension Program

Luncheon Speaker

Linda Fondren
“Shape Up Vicksburg” and Executive Director of Catfish Row Museum

Presentation of Award

Special Session: IRA Section 22007: Discrimination Financial Assistance Program

Dania Davy, *Land Retention Director, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund*
East Point, GA

Recognition of Special Guests/Announcements

Closing Remarks

Darnella Winston
Small Farmers Conference Co-Chair
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Gerald Jones
Small Farmers Conference Co-Chair
Alcorn State University Extension Program

Ben F. Burkett
State Coordinator
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Dr. Franklin Chukwuma
Associate Director for Extension
Alcorn State University Extension

2023 SMALL FARMERS CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Corey Bacon
Joe Barnes
Calvin Broomfield
Dr. Heather Brice
Lazerick Brown
Maya Crooks
Dylan Davis
KeAria Frelix
Janice Harris
Gerald Jones
Kelvin King
Demetrius Lawrence
Caprice Mack
Ashton Norwood
Brittany Oatis
Emary Smith
Margeria Smith
Gloria Sturdevant (Deceased)
Leslie Walker
Darnella Winston

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ben F. Burkett
Dr. Franklin Chukwuma
Dr. Dexter Wakefield, I