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Organized Symposia

TITLE: Budgets for Free! (Moderator: Greg Ibendahl, Mississippi State University)

Organizer: Ken Hood, Mississippi State University

Participants: Damona Doye, Oklahoma State University; David Laughlin, Mississippi State University; Ken Paxton, Louisiana State University; and Steve Turner, Mississippi State University

Support for cost of production estimates for agricultural enterprises among Land Grant Universities has declined significantly though demand for reliable budgets is still significant. State support has declined significantly as other demands on professional time have taken priority. The purpose of this symposium is to raise the awareness of the problems and start a dialogue with professionals in Agricultural Economics with the hope of establishing a plan of action to solve the problems.

TITLE: The Impacts of Ethanol Development on Agriculture in the Southeastern Region (Moderator: John D. Anderson, Mississippi State University)

Organizers: Keith H. Coble and John D. Anderson, Mississippi State University

Participants: John D. Anderson, Keith H. Coble, Yan Liang, and Ardian Harri, Mississippi State University; Francis Epplin, Oklahoma State University; and Darren Hudson, Texas A&M University

The past 2 years witnessed a dramatic increase in fuel price and changes in government ethanol policies. The development in ethanol demand and production has triggered a series of reactions in agriculture. This

symposium focused on the recent development in ethanol and presented three most recent studies on its potential impact on agriculture in the Southeastern region. Participants discussed the impact of renewable fuels standards mandates on the corn market and the impact of ethanol induced corn and soybeans price increases on crop acreages in southeastern region. Participants also discussed the potentials for the south and southwest to play a role in a cellulosic ethanol game. This symposium addressed emerging issues related to ethanol development from different perspectives and stimulated further discussion and research in the area of ethanol impact studies, particularly, for the Southeastern region.

TITLE: Agricultural Labor Use and Trends in Southern Agriculture (Moderator: Marco Palma, Texas A&M University)

Organizers: Marco Palma, Texas A&M University; and H.L. Goodwin, University of Arkansas

Participants: Luis Ribera, Parr Rosson, and David Anderson, Texas A&M University; and H.L. Goodwin, University of Arkansas

Even though agricultural workers represent only a small fraction of the U.S. labor force (2%), availability and cost of labor is one of the biggest challenges agricultural growers face. This symposium discussed labor availability and trends and its potential production and economic effects in southern agriculture and explored some potential solutions.

TITLE: Research Needs for the Gulf Coast: What Should be the Focus for Our Environmental-Resource Economists? (Moderator: Daniel R. Petrolia, Mississippi State University)

Organizer: Daniel R. Petrolia, Mississippi State University

Participants: Rex H. Caffey, Louisiana State University; Craig E. Landry, East Carolina University; Stephen H. Sempier, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; and Michael H. Thomas, Florida A&M University

This symposium was organized as a means for environmental and resource economists working along the Gulf Coast to exchange ideas, identify key research needs, and identify opportunities for collaboration. The topic of this symposium was timely because environmental and resource needs continue to become increasingly important to the decisions of citizens and policymakers in the Gulf Coast. Topics discussed included an analysis of the determinants of flood insurance coverage and household hazard mitigation in the U.S. southeastern coastal zone; the Gulf of Mexico Research Plan, an initiative of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium to identify regional research priorities; recent research on hurricane evacuation behavior conducted in the Miami area; and the economic research

needs in the area of wetland restoration and stewardship.

TITLE: 2008 Farm Bill Implications for Specialty Crop Agriculture (Moderator: Andrew Muhammad, Mississippi State University)

Organizers: Deacue Fields, Auburn University; Ron Rainey, University of Arkansas; Kennrett Jefferson-Moore, North Carolina A&T University; and Jennifer Dennis, Purdue University

Participants: Daniel Whitley, Foreign Agricultural Services; Mike Gunderson, University of Florida; Duncan Chembezi, Alabama A&M University; Ron Rainey, University of Arkansas; and Deacue Fields, Auburn University

The *Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008* is the first farm bill to include a specific title for specialty crops. USDA has planned allotments of \$230 million for specialty crop research and extension projects for fiscal years 2009–2012. This session confronts challenges and opportunities to be proactive in developing strategies to utilize funding and support specialty crop initiatives.