

# MARKET BULLETIN

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May 16, 2024

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## SOUTH CAROLINA FSA FORMING URBAN COUNTY COMMITTEE IN COLUMBIA

BY USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is establishing a new urban county committee (COC) in Columbia, South Carolina, joining 26 other cities across the country with a committee focused on delivery of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs to urban producers.

County committee members make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally, and this new urban county committee in Columbia is part of USDA's broad support for urban and innovative agriculture. **FSA will host two (2) informational meetings on May 21, 2024, and May 23, 2024, for producers to learn more about the urban county committee for Columbia.**

"Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the Agency, and they serve as the eyes and ears for the producers who elected them," said Laurie Funderburk, FSA State Executive Director in South Carolina. "FSA has successfully launched urban county committees in urban areas throughout the nation, and we're excited to establish one here in Columbia to improve how we deliver critical farm loan, conservation, safety net and disaster assistance programs to urban agricultural producers."

USDA is committed to working with farms of all sizes and in all locations, including those in urban areas, and offers a wide variety of programs and services to urban producers to help them start, expand, and improve their operations. USDA encourages all eligible producers and urban growers with farming or ranching operations to participate in county committee elections by nominating yourself or others and by voting in the local urban COC election. Like rural county committee members, urban committee members make

important decisions about how FSA programs are administered locally. In addition, the Urban COC will help identify the needs of the growing urban agriculture markets as well as outreach to local stakeholders and producers about pertinent USDA programs. Urban county committees are composed of three elected members who will serve a term of up to three years.



FSA is looking for producers growing an ag product including but not limited to vegetables, fruits, honey, mushrooms, or flowers to be voters. Producers who sell or distribute ag products can run to serve on the committee by establishing a customer record and completing a nomination form by Aug. 1, 2024. Individuals farming on their own are allowed one vote. Entities, such as non-profits, farming organizations and businesses, are entitled to one vote per entity, and they must designate who will be its voting representative.

If you or your farming organization are interested in participating on your local urban COC as a nominee or a voter, please visit [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information and resources. All interested participants must contact the Calhoun-Richland USDA Service Center to establish a new customer record.

If you are interested in learning more about the Columbia Urban County Committee, please join us at one of the informational meetings:

**May 21, 2024, 11 am – 12 pm**  
 Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center, 8620 Garners Ferry Road, Hopkins, SC 29061  
 Virtual: Please contact Sabrenna Bryant at [sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov](mailto:sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov) for access information.

**May 23, 2024, 5:30 – 6:30 pm**  
 FoodShare South Carolina, 201 Columbia Mall Blvd., Suite 109, Columbia, SC 29223  
 Virtual: Please contact Sabrenna Bryant at [sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov](mailto:sabrenna.bryant@usda.gov) for access information.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in these meetings should contact Sabrenna Bryant at (803) 806-3820, x.102, or dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunication relay services.

## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



HUGH E. WEATHERS

SOUTH CAROLINA  
 COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

## AN UPDATE ON TEXAS

Last month, in this column, I encouraged South Carolina farmers to step up and help Texas farmers and ranchers affected by the devastating wildfires in the Panhandle. We all watched in late February and early March when fires killed thousands of livestock and burned more than 1.2 million acres, leaving very little pasture for the remaining livestock.

Boy, did you step up. South Carolina producers donated 402 of the big round bales of hay, enough to make up 12 tractor trailer loads. Loads were donated by producers in Allendale, Eastover, Lexington, Clover, Aynor, Cameron, and Spartanburg. We also secured financial donations to cover the freight for these loads to the Panhandle, where they are being used to feed livestock. This joint effort by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Clemson Extension Livestock and Forages Agents, the South Carolina Cattlemen's Association, and the South Carolina Farm Bureau went smoothly and quickly thanks to our great staff and partners and hardworking producers.

We got such a great response that we have hay for nearly 20 additional

loads that can be sent if additional funding is secured to assist with transport.

Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Sid Miller sent his thanks to our farmers and those of Alabama and Iowa: "The outpouring of support from our fellow state agriculture leaders has been moving during this tough stretch," Commissioner Miller said. "I would like to give a Texas-sized thank you to our fellow states for having our backs. Their prayers and assistance have served as a source of strength for our communities struggling with the impact of the fires."

Across our nation, the agriculture community always pulls together when it matters most. We were proud to be able to help out Texas ranchers, and I know they would do the same for us.

In other news, this issue of *Market Bulletin* is being released on National Barbecue Day. You might define that term a little differently depending on where you grew up (like in Texas, for instance), but here in South Carolina, it means slow-cooked pork with your choice of sauce. I grew up in the land of mustard-based sauce. There's nothing like a South Carolina-raised hog cooked over wood coals.

*Hugh E. Weathers*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Community Yard & Chicken Sale

May 17 & 18

Join us for our second community yard sale! We will also be selling chickens: Hens & roosters. They are limited so first come first served. Prices will vary. See you soon!

### Old McCaskills Farm

377 Cantey Lane, Rembert

[oldmccaskillsfarm@gmail.com](mailto:oldmccaskillsfarm@gmail.com) • 803-432-9537

[facebook.com/OldMcCaskillsFarm](https://www.facebook.com/OldMcCaskillsFarm)

### South Carolina Ag + Art Tour

May 18 & 19 • 9 am – 4 pm

The South Carolina Ag + Art Tour is a free, self-guided tour of farms and markets featuring local artisans at every stop! During the tour visitors have the opportunity to see first-hand where their food comes from, watch artists in action and purchase their works, enjoy the melodies of local musicians, and learn more about rural life.

### Pickens County

It's our FIRST year on the South Carolina Ag + Art Tour! We invite you to come and experience our great farms, artisans, and of course hospitality that is second to none!

[agandarttour.com/pickens](https://www.agandarttour.com/pickens)

### Newberry County

Welcome to Newberry County, the egg, dairy, and timber capitol of South Carolina! We invite you to enjoy our rich agriculture and artistic heritage.

[agandarttour.com/newberry](https://www.agandarttour.com/newberry)

### Bamberg County

It's our FIRST year on the South Carolina Ag + Art Tour! We invite you to come and experience our great farms, artisans, and of course hospitality that is second to none!

[agandarttour.com/bamberg](https://www.agandarttour.com/bamberg)

### Colleton County

Welcome to the gateway of the Lowcountry! We invite you to pull up a rocking chair and enjoy our great farms and artisans!

[agandarttour.com/colleton](https://www.agandarttour.com/colleton)

### Alpaca Shearing Day

May 18 • 10 am

Come learn about Huacaya Alpacas & how their fleece is a valuable farmstead product, watch shearing, & enjoy a complimentary cup of herbal brew. Alpaca yarns & artisan scarves available for sale in our Little Country Store & baked goodies for purchase in our tiny herbal Tea Room! (Please Note: Out of respect for the alpacas, this event is more like a golf tournament for onlookers – “quiet please” – & not really a comfortable experience for small children.) Registration required; please call.

### Black Walnut Farms, Sharon

[jan@blackwalnutfarmsllc.com](mailto:jan@blackwalnutfarmsllc.com) • 803-868-5451

[blackwalnutfarmsllc.com](https://www.blackwalnutfarmsllc.com)

### Pop-up Flower Shop Event by Five Blossoms Farm

May 25 • 10 am – 2 pm

Grab your friends and family and come out to McGill's Store starting at 10:00 am to get your favorite coffee, baked goods and other products from the store! We will have our locally grown fresh cut flowers, beeswax candles and more at The Blossom Bar!

### McGill's Store

3494 Highway 55 W, Clover

[info@fiveblossomsfarm.com](mailto:info@fiveblossomsfarm.com) • 803-610-5809

[facebook.com/fiveblossomsfarm](https://www.facebook.com/fiveblossomsfarm)

### Saddle Up for St. Jude

May 25 • 11 am – 4 pm

Join us for some fun and food in support for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Trail ride, hayrides, jump house, games, BBQ, friend chicken, has & rice, cakes and pies.

### Cedar Grove Farm

6850 Pisgah Road, Rembert

Contact: Dale Cauthen

803-669-1285

### 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Plow Days Tractor Show & Pull

May 31 – June 1

Gates open at 8:00 am, show grounds open all day. Main event Saturday includes exhibitors, live demonstrations, and vendors. Pulling events are antique farm tractors at 10:00 am and garden tractors at 2:00 pm. Free admission. Free vendor setup. Free exhibitor setup. For more information, visit our Facebook page.

### Broad River Antique Power Association

320 Green Acres Road, Gaffney

Contact: Mike Humphries

[broadrivertractor@gmail.com](mailto:broadrivertractor@gmail.com) • 704-300-5595

[facebook.com/broadriverantiquepower](https://www.facebook.com/broadriverantiquepower)

### Marshall Farm's Kids Farm Day Camp

June 10 – 12

Marshall Farm's first ever Summer Farm Camp! We are excited to be able to share our farm and all the animals this summer with your awesome kiddos! At our farm we believe in the importance of connecting children with nature and teaching them about agriculture. Our goal is to provide a hands-on learning opportunity where kids can interact with animals and gain a deeper understanding of where their food comes from. Our days will be packed with educational fun, bible study, farm chores, games, and much more! Ages 4-13. Cost is \$150.

### Marshall Farm

1327 Old Georgetown Road East, Bethune

[marshallfarmsc@yahoo.com](mailto:marshallfarmsc@yahoo.com) • 803-272-9940

[facebook.com/farmingtheoldhomeplace](https://www.facebook.com/farmingtheoldhomeplace)

## Market Bulletin Office

Monday – Friday • 8 AM – 4:30 PM

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[agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin](https://agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin)

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Market News

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803-737-4588

Market News Recording

803-737-5900

Fruit & Vegetable  
Market News

803-737-4671

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803-253-4052

## The South Carolina Market Bulletin

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### POLICIES FOR ADVERTISING

For our full policies, please visit:

[agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin-policies](https://agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin-policies)

Only ads pertaining to the production of agricultural products and related items are published. Ads are accepted for South Carolina items, even if the seller lives out of state, provided the item is in state at the time the ad is published and at the time of sale.

Ads are published free of charge and in good faith. The *Market Bulletin* reserves the right to edit and verify ads but assumes no responsibility for their content.

Ads cannot be accepted from agents, dealers, or commercial businesses, including real estate. Sealed bids, legal notices, or consignment sales are not accepted.

### SUBMITTING ADS

No matter the submission method, submissions must include the advertiser's name, complete address with zip code and county, and phone number with area code. While we don't publish the address, we need this information for our records. Do not use all capital letters.

- **Online:** Go to [agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin](https://agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin). Select "Submit Market Bulletin Ad" and complete the form. If you include your email address, you will receive an automated reminder for a renewal.

- **Mail:** SC Market Bulletin, PO Box 11280, Columbia, SC 29211. You must use 8.5 × 11 inch paper.

- **Email:** Send ads to [marketbulletin@scda.sc.gov](mailto:marketbulletin@scda.sc.gov). Put the words "Market Bulletin ad" in the subject line.

- **Fax:** 803-734-0659

The deadline for submitting ads and notices is noon on Tuesday of the week **before** the publication date.

## NEXT AD DEADLINE

MAY 21 • 12:00 PM

## SCDA State Farmers Markets

### SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FARMERS MARKET

3483 Charleston Highway  
West Columbia, SC 29172  
803-737-4664

### GREENVILLE STATE FARMERS MARKET

1354 Rutherford Road  
Greenville, SC 29609  
864-244-4023

### PEE DEE STATE FARMERS MARKET

2513 W. Lucas Street  
Florence, SC 29501  
843-665-5154

### VISIT AGRICULTURE.SC.GOV

Click on the State Farmers Markets  
button for more information about  
each location

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Email \_\_\_\_\_  This is a gift

5/16/24





MISCELLANEOUS

**JD A & B PARTS**

block, heads, pulley, pistons, etc, photos avail, \$175 obo for all, cash Carroll Shealy Laurens 864-872-4184

**BILLY GOAT GRUFF**

by Tarter, ramp, platform & head gate, \$1250 Bobby Page Spartanburg 864-494-2501

**MILK CRATES**

\$5 ea obo; Skil battery weed eater, \$175 obo Lawrence Hoffman Richland 803-422-3970

**CARPENTER BEE TRAPS**

sold in lots of 5, \$85, ppd William F Timmerman Aiken 803-640-6265

**WOODEN FENCE POSTS**

var sizes from 4-14" posts, 6.5-8'L, \$4+ Tyler Sanderlin Barnwell 803-709-2626

**HDWD LUMBER**

var Oaks & Poplar, boards 1"x12"x8'L, \$4/bdft, free del 300 bdft or less in Upstate Ryan Anderson Greenville 864-234-2918

**HORSE MANURE**

for composting, you load, we will help, \$20/truck load Stephanie Scharf Kershaw 864-992-6131

**5 GAL BUCKETS W/LIDS**

\$1.85; wooden pallets, for hay storage, etc, \$1/reg; \$2.50/HD F Rowe Newberry 803-271-7768

**6'-30'L1"x6" CEDAR LUMBER**

cedar posts, & util poles, \$1-5/ft James Burns Laurens 864-918-6308

**MEADOWS #1 AUTO SAWMILL**

15' carriage, log turner, \$10,500; Dayton 12 hp gas air compressor, \$1500 Furman Mahon Laurens 864-684-9525

**QUAIL LITTER**

del & spread, \$30/ton w/in 30 mis of St Matthews Matt Miller Richland 803-783-9024

**3 OLD TUBS**

exc for water troughs, \$65 ea Sam Rikard Lexington 803-892-2630

**JADERLOON GRNHS FRAME**

24x48, you move, \$400 Ted Wentzky Anderson 864-617-1031

**RND CEDAR POSTS**

cut to var sizes, 4-10" dia, 6-12' L, \$6-12 ea, depend on size; cut 4x4, \$2/bdft Douglass Britt McCormick 864-391-3334

**GOURDS**

for Purple Martin houses or crafting, \$6/lrg, \$/med, \$2/sm Glen Clamp Lexington 803-673-8013

**4' TUBE GATE**

\$45; 7x3/8 chain hook one end, \$20 Russell Goings Union 864-426-2309

**DRY ROUGH CUT PINE**

Oak boards, all sizes, Pine, \$2/bdft; Oak, \$4/bdft Joel Grubb Calhoun 803-351-0144

**5 HP ELEC MOTOR**

new, bought for grain auger, nvr used, \$750 Charles Nichols Saluda 864-445-8350

**LAWN VAC**

\$650; smooth lawn roller, \$150; Northern hyd 12v 15 gal spry, \$35 Bobby Dennis Newberry 803-924-2118

**(5) 235/80R22.5 USED TIRES**

almost full tread & (1) 245/75R22.5, will replace 11R22.5, \$60 ea Arthur Langley Lexington 803-429-5482

**GARDEN TRACTOR**

Cub Cadet 1450, 14 hp Kohler, hydro trans, hyd lift, \$450 obo Stanley Taylor Chester 803-789-5236

**HORSE MANURE/ SHAVINGS**

from stable, exc for garden & flower beds, \$10/Bobcat bucket scoop Harry Mcmillan Spartanburg 864-327-7369

**1½ HP TUNNEL FAN MOTORS**

used, GWC, \$50 ea; boiler house heating brooders, GC, \$40 ea Michael Wise Newberry 803-271-4215

**OAK & CHERRY FIREWOOD**

seasoned & green, \$80/FS P-up load, more; Kubota 5030 tractor 14.9-26 rear tires, \$300 Marty Black Lexington 803-920-3100

**BAND-SAWED PINE LUMBER**

3-12"W, 7'-16'L, good 75¢/bdft, better \$1/bdft, best \$1.25/bdft; Pecan wood, \$250/cord Tom Harmon Lexington 803-530-3348

**PARTS FOR A JD 2755**

short block, \$1200; radiator, \$150; fuel tank, \$200 Robert Hurley Laurens 864-981-5352

**PECAN WOOD BUNDLE**

\$10 Billy Gallman Newberry 803-276-7171

**(5) 24" VENTILATION FANS**

\$100 ea; 2 dump tanks, \$200 ea Steve McAlhany Orangeburg 803-682-3834

**SNAPPER ZERO TURN MWR**

48" cut, Briggs eng, \$2800 Terry Blakely Greenville 864-483-1920

**OAK FIREWOOD**

long bed p/up, cut to size del & stack, \$150 Ronald Wright Richland 803-606-1666

**DR BUGGY W/FOLDING TOP**

EC, shaves & dbl pole, \$2300 Harry Isbell Anderson 864-617-2627

**OLD COMP FARM BELL**

old, #3, \$350; xl farm bell, w/wheel, comp, \$1200; #20 hash pots, \$200 ea; #15, \$150; more Perry Masters Greenville 864-561-4792

**55 GAL FG METAL DRUMS**

\$20 ea; 30 & 55 gal plastic drums, solid tops, \$15 & \$20 ea; 275 gal port tow tanks, \$50 ea Philip Poole Union 864-427-1589

**HOLE DIGGER**

gas, w/8" & 10" augers, all items nvr used, \$410 cash only Randy Orr Anderson 864-295-3736

WANT - FARM EQUIPMENT

**FORD 501 7' SICKLE MWR**

& 15' batwing mwr Rowland Alston Sumter 803-491-7180

**FORD 530 OR 532 SQ BALER**

for parts Glenn Mack Orangeburg 803-707-1598

WANT - LIVESTOCK

EACH AD MUST LIST SPECIFIC ANIMALS.

**SHETLAND & WELCH PONIES**

to live on 20A, any age, reasonably priced or donated, w/neg Coggins Jeanie Sabbagha Sumter 803-494-9449

WANT - MISCELLANEOUS

**WANT TO LEASE PASTURE**

for Ang cows or hay fields to cut & bale Britton Mccarter York 704-913-6083

**PINE STRAW FIELDS**

long needle, for raking David Shull Lexington 803-318-4263

**PULPWOOD SAW TIMBER**

hdwd pine, all types of thinning or clear cut, Upstate cos Tim Morgan Greenville 864-420-0251

**USED HORSE CORRAL**

rnd pen panels, near Sumter, fair priced Jeanie Sabbagha Sumter 803-494-9449

**BLKSMITH ANVILS**

any size farm bells, or broken bells for parts R Long Newberry 803-924-9039

**ELEC FUEL PUMP**

for 500 gal dsl tank Charles Nichols Saluda 864-992-2753

**1000 GAL NURSE TANK**

for nitrogen Scott Langston Oconee 864-723-0125

**HORSE WAGON**

1 or 2 horse w/wood spoke whls Harry Isbell Anderson 864-617-2627

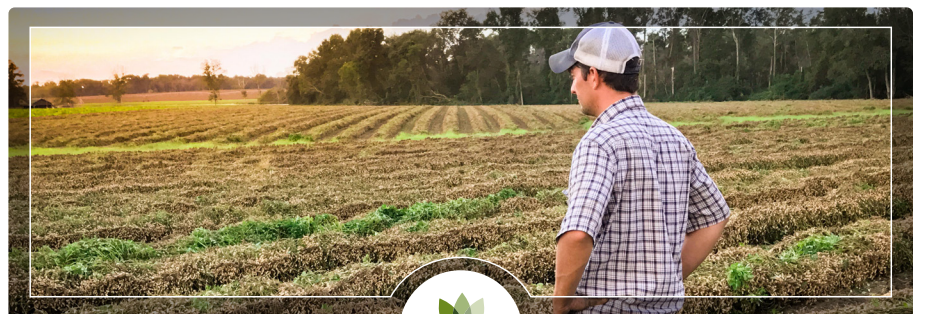
**ANY SIZE WASH POTS**

syrup kettle, anvils, lrg coffee grinder, old lighting rod w/ balls & weathervane, more Perry Masters Greenville 864-561-4792

Download our abbreviation key  
[agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin/abbreviations](http://agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin/abbreviations)



SCDA Assistant Commissioner Aaron Wood addressed a group of producers at the Upstate Ag Resource and Farmer Roundtable held at Feed & Seed May 7.



Get Your Farm Finances on Course

As a farmer (and CEO of your business), managing your finances can be a challenge. But for long term success, it may be the most important thing you do.

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- Family Finance
- Risk Management
- Applying for Financing
- FSA/SBA and Other Programs

**JULY 16: Metter, GA**

GA Grown Innovation Center | 25 South Terrell St

**AUG 8: Monroe, NC**

Union County Ag Center | 3230-D Presson Rd

**AUG 22: Batesburg-Leesville, SC**

T&S Farm | 3500 Pond Branch Rd

Register SOON!

[AgSouthFC.com/AGAware](http://AgSouthFC.com/AGAware)

Workshops are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Lunch is provided. Earn FSA Direct Borrower Training credits.



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Promoting & Educating the Next Generation of Farmers

# USDA REMINDS PRODUCERS OF CLIMATE-SMART OPPORTUNITIES USING FARM LOAN PROGRAMS

BY USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Washington, DC, April 30, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that Farm Loan Programs can be used to support a variety of climate-smart agriculture practices, which build on many practices that farmers and ranchers already use, like cover cropping, nutrient management and conservation tillage.

“Farmers and ranchers are already doing their part to be stewards of our land, but some may lack the financial resources to take their efforts to the next level,” said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. “USDA’s Farm Service Agency offers a variety of loans that can help those who would like to explore opportunities in their operations to make them more efficient and make a positive impact on our environment.”

Climate-smart agricultural practices generate significant environmental benefits by capturing and sequestering carbon, improving water management, restoring soil health and more. Farm loan funding complements other tools to help producers adopt climate-smart practices, such as FSA’s Conservation Reserve Program, crop insurance options that support conservation, and conservation programs offered by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FSA offers multiple types of loans to help farmers and ranchers start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. These loans can provide the capital needed to invest in climate-smart practices and equipment including the establishment of

rotational grazing systems, precision agriculture equipment or machinery for conversion to no-till residue management. Additionally, for programs like Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS conservation programs where USDA and the producer share the implementation cost, a farm loan could be used for the producer’s share, if consistent with the authorized loan purpose.

Some additional ways farm loans can be leveraged to invest in climate-smart agriculture practices or equipment include:

- Precision Agriculture Equipment — Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment like GPS globes, monitors, or strip till fertilizer equipment.
- Cover Crops — Eligible producers could use an Annual Operating Loan for seed costs.
- No/Reduced Till — Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment.
- Livestock Facility Air Scrubber or Waste Treatment — Eligible producers could use a Farm Ownership Loan for capital improvements to livestock facilities.
- Cross Fencing — Eligible producers could use an Annual or Term Operating Loan to purchase fencing and installation equipment.

“There are a multitude of ways our portfolio of loans can be used to support climate-smart practices,” Ducheneaux said. “In some cases, this may even result in lower input costs, higher yields and a positive impact to the producers’ bottom line as well as our natural resources.”

Visit the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry webpage on [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) to learn more and see detailed examples of how an FSA farm loan can support climate-smart agriculture practices.

## FARM LOAN IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

USDA’s Farm Service Agency has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate Farm Loan Program customer-facing business processes. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a Direct Loan application to FSA annually, and its 85,000 Direct Loan borrowers, FSA has made many improvements, including:

- The Loan Assistance Tool on farmers.gov that provides customers with an interactive online, step-by-step guide to identifying the Direct Loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.
- An Online Loan Application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet and build a farm operating plan.
- An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local USDA Service Center to pay a loan installment.
- A simplified direct loan paper application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.

# FIRST SEA TURTLE NEST OF 2024 REPORTED IN GARDEN CITY

GARDEN CITY IS HOME TO THE STATE'S FIRST SEA TURTLE NEST OF THE YEAR

BY SCDNR

South Carolina’s sea turtle nesting season has begun a couple days earlier than normal with a loggerhead nest reported in Garden City.

Trained volunteers (South Carolina Department of Natural Resources permit number MTP524) with the Garden City Surfside Sea Turtle Guardians located the nest April 29 while walking the beach. They are among the team of over 1,500 volunteers and biologists that will regularly patrol South Carolina’s beaches through October to count, monitor and protect sea turtle nests.

May 1 traditionally marks the beginning of sea turtle season in South Carolina, but recent sea turtle activity indicated nesting might begin early this year. Last week, volunteers with North Myrtle Beach Sea Turtle Patrol noted the first ‘false crawl’ of the season, made by a loggerhead female who came ashore but returned to sea without nesting. Other early nest years include Folly Beach on April 29 in 2002 and Kiawah Island on April 26 in 2019.

"With warmer winter conditions and observations of mating loggerheads, there was some expectation that nesting would begin sooner than May, especially after the initial false crawl reported," said biologist Michelle Pate, who oversees SCDNR's sea turtle nesting program. "We ask that beachfront residents and visitors recreating on our coast turn off lights at night as sea turtles begin this annual ritual of nesting."

Nesting requires a great deal of energy, so female sea turtles do not lay eggs every year. This cyclical

pattern of nesting results in fluctuating nest numbers from year to year. It’s not unusual for record-breaking years (like 2019; 8,795 nests) to follow low nesting years (like 2018; 2,766).

Overall, sea turtle nest numbers across the Southeast have trended up over the past decade, making biologists across the region optimistic that these threatened reptiles are beginning to recover after several decades of conservation efforts.

## SOUTH CAROLINA SEA TURTLE NEST NUMBERS

- 2018: 2,766
- 2019: 8,795 (highest on record)
- 2020: 5,560
- 2021: 5,644
- 2022: 7,996
- 2023: 6,618

Four sea turtle species nest on South Carolina beaches: loggerheads, greens, Kemp’s ridleys, and leatherbacks. All four species are classified as endangered or threatened and are protected under the Endangered Species Act in addition to state law. Loggerhead nests comprise the majority of the state’s total number each year.

Sea turtle clutches average 120 eggs and hatch after approximately 60 days. Nesting females may remain in South Carolina waters and continue to nest every two weeks, laying up to six nests per season. Throughout this stressful time, the turtles also abstain from eating.

South Carolina beachgoers can help the state’s sea turtles by keeping beaches clean, turning beachfront lights out to avoid disorienting turtles, and giving all sea turtles and nests a wide and respectful berth when encountered on the beach.

## SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON REMINDERS

- Report all sick/injured/dead sea turtles and nest disturbances to the SCDNR at 1-800-922-5431 so that staff/volunteers can respond as soon as possible.
- Respect boating laws and boat cautiously, especially in small tidal creeks where sea turtles like to feed. Boat strikes have emerged as the leading cause of death for sea turtles in South Carolina.
- Keep artificial lights off the beach at night during nesting season – this includes beachfront property lights and flash photography, which can disorient nesting mothers and hatchlings.
- Always respect sea turtles by observing them from a distance on the beach. Individuals that violate federal law by harming or interfering with sea turtles or their nests can be subject to civil penalties of up to \$25,000 and up to a year’s imprisonment.
- Keep our beaches and ocean clean by avoiding single-use plastics. Plastic bags and balloons are among the most common trash items found on South Carolina beaches and can cause injury or death when sea turtles mistake them for food.
- Promote and support our program for continued conservation of sea turtles in South Carolina.

# CLEMSON, USDA SCIENTISTS RESEARCH TO HELP BOOST COTTON PRODUCTION

BY DENISE ATTAWAY, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

FLORENCE, S.C. – Cotton is the Earth’s primary natural fiber but climate change and other factors can stagnate yield gain and hamper fiber quality improvements.

Clemson University and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists want to develop improved breeding tools, namely DNA markers (molecular tags associated with a phenotypic trait), germplasm, and enhanced management practices to help boost U.S. cotton production.

Molecular tags mark or identify genes and their specific alleles (various forms of a gene). These tags help accurately describe phenotypic traits, which are observable traits such as height, biomass, leaf shape, etc.

This innovative research is being conducted at the Clemson University Pee Dee Research and Education Center (REC), 2200 Pocket Road, Florence, South Carolina 29506.

“Cotton accounts for one-quarter of global fiber consumption,” said Sachin Rustgi, a molecular breeder at the Pee Dee REC. “While there has been some progress made to cotton improvement for yield potential, improvements to fiber quality, adaptations to climate change and yield stability are still very much needed.”

Customized cropping systems can decrease environmental impacts, such as degraded soil, while maximizing ecosystem services, such as

natural pest control in cotton production. During this study, the scientists plan to develop novel cotton cover cropping systems that conserve soil moisture, reduce fertilizer inputs and increase soil health for sustainable cotton production.

much is expressed from various developmental stages in different genotypes. In this case, these genes regulate the fate of plant-growing tips or meristematic tissues that produce new growth, like animal stem cells.



Research conducted at the Pee Dee REC includes genomic DNA analyses to uncover associations between DNA markers and various observable and molecular traits, such as expression patterns of various genes. DNA is a molecule that contains a genetic code unique to every living organism.

Facilities in which the plants are grown for this research include walk-in and reach-in growth chambers, a greenhouse and fields.

“These facilities enable the testing of genetic materials in both controlled environments and natural settings,” Rustgi said. “Situated on prime agricultural

land, the Pee Dee REC allows for the practical application of basic research findings, ensuring that technological advancements are implemented where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact for South Carolina farmers.”

In addition to Rustgi, other scientists participating in this research are Salman Naveed and Johnson Toyinbo, Clemson University doctoral students; Michael Jones, Clemson Extension cotton specialist; and Todd Campbell, United States Department of Agriculture research geneticist.

In addition, the scientists also plan to develop breeding methods to improve plant performance and broaden the genetic base. Broadening the genetic base increases diversity and gives breeders more cotton plant choices. This allows the scientists to find genotypes that perform better under certain environmental conditions or pest/pathogen pressures. Cotton production in the United States began from 12 founder genotypes, resulting in a narrow genetic base.

The Pee Dee REC houses state-of-the-art molecular biology labs capable of determining how

# USDA STRENGTHENS REGULATIONS TO PROTECT HORSES FROM SORING ABUSE

BY USDA APHIS

WASHINGTON, April 29, 2024 – In an effort to end horse soring at Tennessee Walking Horse shows, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing strengthened Horse Protection Act regulations. Soring is a cruel and inhumane practice where some owners and trainers chemically or physically irritate or burn horses to provide an accentuated gait that gives them an unfair advantage in walking horse competitions and fraudulent purchase prices at horse shows.

Walking horses are known for their naturally high gait, but to be more successful in competitions some owners and trainers use cruel methods to exaggerate a horse’s gait. These inhumane methods may cause the horse to suffer physical pain, distress, inflammation, or lameness while walking and moving.

“For far too long, some within the Tennessee Walking Horse industry have sored and abused their horses, despite the industry’s inspection process and our own enforcement efforts,” said Jenny Lester-Moffitt, Under Secretary for USDA Marking and Regulatory Programs. “This abuse must stop. Eliminating this cruel practice will help protect horses competing in these shows and level

the playing field for the industry. The independent inspection process should strengthen the competition at these shows and benefit the many owners and trainers who do right by their animals.”

The stronger regulations include:

Eliminating industry self-regulation and the role of industry-backed Designated Qualified Persons as inspectors at horse shows, exhibitions, sales, and auctions. Only APHIS inspectors and independent non-APHIS-employed horse protection inspectors screened, trained, and authorized by APHIS will have inspection authority.

Prohibiting any device, method, practice, or substance applied to a horse that can cause or is associated with soring.

Prohibiting on Tennessee Walking or racking horses all action devices and non-therapeutic pads, artificial toe extensions, and wedges, as well as all substances on the extremities above the hoof, including lubricants.

Removing the scar rule from the regulations and replacing it with a more accurate description of visible dermatological changes indicative of soring.

Amending recordkeeping and reporting requirements for management at covered events to better enforce the HPA.

In 2017, APHIS withdrew the initial Horse Protection Act final rule from public inspection per a memorandum issued by the Executive Office of the President. Following a lawsuit based on that action, the agency withdrew the 2017 rule on October 30, 2023, and published a new proposed rule, receiving 8,787 comments. The new rule builds upon information we have learned since the 2017 rule was drafted. Notably, it incorporates lessons and science-based recommendations from the 2021 National Academies of Science review of the inspection program.

The Horse Protection Act is a Federal law that prohibits sored horses from participating in shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions. The Horse Protection Act also prohibits the transportation of sored horses to or from any of these events.

A copy of this rule may be viewed today, and the rule will be published in the Federal Register in the coming weeks. This rule will be effective February 1, 2025.

# NEW CUT FLOWER CO-OP WILL MARKET WHOLESALE SOUTH CAROLINA BLOOMS

BY EVA MOORE | PHOTOS AT FRAYLICK FARM BY EMILY BARBEE PHOTOGRAPHY

For Melissa Smith, it's dahlias. At her Upstate farm, she farms cut flowers full-time on an acre of land, while her husband raises pigs. She's grown a lot of flowers in the past 12 years, but dahlias are what she loves most—and where her expertise really shows.

Smith is one of five founding members of a new agriculture cooperative in South Carolina that is working together to market wholesale cut flowers to the floral industry.

Along with Smith, who owns Fraylick Farm, the co-op members are: David Blue of Farmer Blue, Linda Bradley of Purple Tuteur Farm, Lisa Rudick of Clear Spring Gardens, and Julie Rainey of PearlGirl Flower Farm.

With members in the Upstate, Lowcountry, and Midlands, these five farmers are already selling to florists throughout the state. Working together, they think they can leverage their experience and locations to serve more wholesale customers.

South Carolina's geography and diverse climate works in their favor, Smith says. Lowcountry producers can grow flowers through the winter, while the Upstate can grow through the summer, with the Midlands filling in throughout the year.

"One area might have a crop for four weeks, but if you look across the state, you can take that four weeks and turn it into three months," she says.

As with many crops, extending the season helps farmers build a market for the product.

"If your customers know that crop is going to be there for a long time, that's so important, because then they can plan for it," Smith explains. "If customers know they can count on a crop, they're likelier to buy it locally versus ordering it in from a national wholesaler."

The cooperative was formed with the help of the South Carolina Center for Cooperative and Enterprise Development (SCCCED), a collaborative effort between the South Carolina Department



doing it on their own, or five doing it on their own, it's hard to get to an efficient size."

The co-op's founding members are all experienced flower growers who already work with commercial customers. This was a conscious choice, Richards says. The state's cut flower industry is booming, and there's broad interest among local flower farmers in working together – one early co-op interest meeting attracted 80 people. Ultimately, the eventual co-op members decided to limit their membership to experienced commercial growers in order to achieve their specific goals in the short term.

"Just like with produce, you have to meet certain standards to sell to florists – flower quality, how long the stem is, all sorts of things," Richards explains. "It was too big a lift to try to train newcomers on those unwritten industry standards." (That's one of the cooperative's next projects: to create a wholesale readiness training guide for newer cut flower growers so they can join the co-op in the future.)



The co-op's long-term goal is to have distribution hubs with cold storage in the state's three metropolitan areas. For now, they're starting with coordinating distribution, picking up from each other's farms as part of their delivery runs. They've also applied for a Specialty Crop Block Grant to buy a truck and hire a driver for the co-op.

of Agriculture, Clemson University Cooperative Extension, the South Carolina State Small Business Development Center and Matson Consulting. The SCCCED is funded through USDA Rural Development's Rural Cooperative Development Grant.

Steve Richards is the center's director.

"I think one of the big benefits of co-ops is scaling up your activities," Richards says. "With one person

"The goal would be for the farmers to focus on growing, and then for the co-op to be facilitator of moving and distributing those flowers," Smith says. "That way farmers can do what they do best."

"A whole new world of possibilities suddenly opened up," she says.

To get in touch with the co-op, email [info@scflowers.coop](mailto:info@scflowers.coop).

## SIGN UP FOR PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE TRAINING

SC PRODUCE SAFETY RULE GROWER TRAINING COURSE AVAILABLE ONLINE VIA ZOOM

**Dates:** May 28 and 29, 2024

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm EDT

**Cost:** \$35

**To Register:** [bit.ly/RemoteMay28PSR](https://bit.ly/RemoteMay28PSR)

**Contact:** Chad Carter, Clemson Extension Food Systems and Safety Associate, [ctcarte@clemson.edu](mailto:ctcarte@clemson.edu), 843-730-5211

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety. The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement outlined in § 112.22(c) that requires 'At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration.'

### WHAT TO EXPECT

The trainers will spend approximately seven hours of instruction time covering content contained in these seven modules:

- Introduction to Produce Safety
- Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
- Soil Amendments
- Wildlife, Domesticated Animals, and Land Use
- Agricultural Water (Part I: Production Water; Part II: Postharvest Water)
- Postharvest Handling and Sanitation
- How to Develop a Farm Food Safety Plan

### BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE COURSE

The course will provide a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and co-management information, FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements,

and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan. Individuals who participate in this course are expected to gain a basic understanding of:

- Microorganisms relevant to produce safety and where they may be found on the farm
- How to identify microbial risks, practices that reduce risks, and how to begin implementing produce safety practices on the farm
- Parts of a farm food safety plan and how to begin writing one
- Requirements in the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and how to meet them.

After attending the entire course, participants will be eligible to receive a certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) that verifies they have completed the training course. To receive an AFDO certificate, a participant must be present for the entire training and submit the appropriate paperwork to their trainer at the end of the course.