



Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group **CHRONICLES**

Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group is sponsored by Winston County Self Help Cooperative • Volume 1 • Issue 1 • February 2011

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WCSHC Organized LMS Farmers' Connection



Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group

By Frank Taylor

Winston County Self Help Cooperative's mission of helping save rural America has ignited a new group in central Mississippi. Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group (LMS) came to fruition under the auspices of WCSHC in May 2010. LMS consists of landowners, farmers and youth from Leake, Madison and Scott Counties. According to LMS' Team Leader Kenneth Walker, "we are thankful to join alliance with this formidable team of WCSHC. They have provided leadership and technical support in building LMS's structure. We exceeded 2010's expectations and has set lofty goals for 2011 with a range of support from WCSHC. Our members' farm enterprises consist of cattle, vegetables and forestry". WCSHC provided animals vaccination through Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine in September 2010 and "we are extremely grateful for this opportunity according to member Jeanette Greenwood. Additionally, Alcorn State University's Anthony Reed conducted two estate planning workshops along with lawyer Linda Hampton. WCSHC conducted a canning class which created

positive vibes for more classes in 2011. USDA and Extension personnel are participating in our monthly meetings to inform members of upcoming events and provided technical assistance with applications for service. We have organized a youth group with plans of planting our first garden in April. This is an added benefit of organizing into numbers which represents strength and provides energy to make a difference in rural America. Again, we are thankful to WCSHC for helping LMS organize and now, "we are committed to help save rural America". This project is part of Winston County Self Help Cooperative's 2501 Program funded through Outreach Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program (OASDFR).



Winston County Self Help Cooperative members

Our Purpose

From the Team Leader
Kenneth Walker



The Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group president, Kenneth Walker states that "I feel that this could be a viable organizational opportunity for marketing and distributing agricultural resources and information. Through working with entities such as the Leake County USDA agency, Heifer International, WCSHC, NRTS, MSU Cooperative Extension, Alcorn State University Extension Program and other agencies, we hope to be able to offer technical assistance and information to get a head start and improve the effectiveness of available member services for our and surrounding communities."

These Extension professionals provide educational and technical assistance opportunities to strengthen the capacity of citizens and organizations throughout the state of Mississippi by furthering the offerings of the Enterprise and Community Resource Development program area. By utilizing the latest research-based knowledge, strategies and technology, the capability of helping people understand community change and identify opportunities to improve their social and economic well-being is strengthened. Efforts to find practical and timely solutions are greatly enhanced by working with local communities, organizations and partnering agencies.

Walker further states that "We have attended several meetings of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative's as a learning tool to gather valuable information concerning agricultural resources and become members of their network. Their meetings start and end on time. You leave WCSHC's meetings with a wealth of knowledge and fire in your belly to create positive change. This is our goal for the Leake County Group as well. We hope to piggy-back and generate that same hope and inspire individuals to manage Mother Earth's natural resources."

Currently, the Leake, Madison & Scott (County) Farmers Connection Group meet at Free Mission Missionary Baptist Church on the second Monday of each month for one hour to discuss new and old business. The topics are very informative, stated Jeanette Greenwood. "I only wish more community citizens would come out to the meetings. So far we have had a representative from the MSU Cooperative Extension discuss various rural development opportunities and schedule individual family sessions for the free vaccinations of cattle, and cattle artificial insemination. An attorney from the tri-county area, Linda Hampton of Louisville, MS volunteered her time and knowledge concerning land ownership, estate planning and the benefits and importance of a last will and testament."



LEAKE, MADISON & SCOTT FARMERS CONNECTION GROUP CHRONICLES

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LMS Farmers Connection Group will meet Monday March 14, 6:00 pm at Ofahoma Fire Department 2531 Forest Grove Road Carthage, MS

**New WCSHC Website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube social media sites are coming soon!!
Visit WCSHC.com**

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Creating Hope in Rural America Membership



(Middle) Pricilla Williamson, Natural Resources Conservation Service and (Right) Frank Taylor WCSHC Team Leader



We are looking for more active participants who will eventually become members. As of now membership dues are not required. "Most people do not want to participate in an organization, when they hear the words fee or dues. In this tough economic climate, another financial obligation is the last thing people need. What we want to do first is to be able to show the productivity of this program and let it speak for itself. At that point we feel we will be able to have more of a selling point" stated retired principal and lifelong resident of the community, Sam Hoye. "We are encouraging everyone to participate in LMS' monthly meetings to find out current farming information and build a successful farm operation.

Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group (LMS) efforts of disseminating relevant agriculture information and inspiring underserved landowners to become better managers of their natural resources displayed itself back on May 15, 2010 @ Kermit Walker's Family Farm in the Ofahoma Community, Carthage, MS. After landowner from Leake, Madison and Scott counties gathered, retired Leake county educator W.B. Jones offered prayer and Jeanette Greenwood extended words of welcome. Kenneth Walker stated, "As small producers, we are searching for alternative enterprises and innovated methods to reduce operating expenses. I have profiles on 30 small producers within a 10 mile radius of this farm. Therefore, we need an organization to voice our concerns and advocate policy for small producers. We have attended several of Winston County's Self Help Cooperative meetings to glean

needed agriculture information and build a network of mentors. Pricilla Williamson, local district conservationist from Natural Resources Conservation Service detailed processes to obtain cost share assistance. You should provide Farm Service Agency (FSA) with a copy of your deed or lease agreement. If your land is held as tenants in commons or multiple owners, then you will need power of attorney documentation to make management decisions. Your lease agreement or power of attorney documentation needs to cover five years to implement practices.

Williamson encouraged participants to get involved the USDA's County Working Group to formulate priorities for cost sharing practices. Also, Williamson stated, "You should select contractors with longstanding reputations of implement practices correctly to avoid costly mistakes.



Good vacuum form tight seals which keep liquids in and air and microorganisms out.

Canning Workshop



Winston County Self Help Cooperative visited LMS Farmers Connection Group for a canning workshop during on of its regularly scheduled meetings. WCSHC members

shared knowledge of an almost lost art—canning. Members brought for show and tell some of the vegetables and preserves. They elaborated on proper techniques of canning or preserving food. Vegetables must be carefully selected, washed and sometimes peeled before the actual hot packing process begins. The hot packing process includes adding other acidic chemicals to the foods such as lemon juice and vinegars to incorporate other seasonings. The use of acceptable containers and self sealing lids was stressed. Collectively, these practices remove oxygen, destroy enzymes and prevent the growth of undesirable bacteria, yeast and molds and help form a high vacuum in jars.



Local Farmers meet with Delegates at State Capitol



LMS members Leroy Strange, Tim Walker and Jeanette Greenwood traveled to the State Capitol, January 6, 2011 and met with state legislators. This opportunity allowed LMS members to express concerns about legislations regarding farming and environmental regulations. Jeanette Greenwood stated, we were awarded an opportunity to speak with

legislators about issues affecting our communities. Tim Walker expressed needs for alternative crops to generate income from their natural resources. Mushrooms were discussed as an opportunity for local farmers. There may be funding available for interested parties. Participants will disseminate information learned at February's meeting.

WCSHC Field Trip



The Leake, Madison & Scott Farmers Connection Group participated in Winston

County Self Help Cooperative's fall cattle field day in Louisville, MS. LMS members' fellowship with other farmers and traded recipes to develop success farm operations. We were able to observe a beautiful herd of cattle sponsored through WCSHC's Heifer Program. The host farm of Alonzo and Peggy Millers displayed an old fashion chicken coop which stole the show. LMS member enjoyed the educational field day and will share information learned. The following individuals representative LMS Jeanette Greenwood, Edwina Watkins, and Chandra Gates, Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Smith and their grandson. After the meeting we were served refreshments consisting of homemade sloppy Joes, cookies potato and cookies.

Future Projects

According to Jeanette Greenwood plans are underway for a cookout for current members and others. "Also, there will be a youth division created in the spring of 2011. "Just as my generation and the generations before me, we need to teach our children how to garden. Many of our youth don't grow up and leave home. Fortunately, they continue to live and raise families on the land handed down through the years. Gardening is another way of providing an

alternative for a food source. During these tumultuous economic times, growing your own vegetable and or fruit could be a cost savings for families feeling the strain of the economy with large families. Growing ones own fruits and vegetables is a much fresher and healthier alternative. Since the garden would be something of your own creation, you would be fully aware of the chemicals or pesticides introduced. It could also be an additional as well as main source of income. It takes time and hard work, but it is worth the time and effort in the long run.

Bulk feed Purchase



January 10, 2011 was the first meeting of the year. This meeting occurred at Ofahoma Volunteer Fire Department. Frank Taylor of Winston County Self Help Cooperative was present. Taylor suggested that we prioritize the qualities of the type of bulk feed we were interested in purchasing. Tommy Faulkner, President of the Madison County Cattleman's Association, was in attendance as well. He will team with Sam Hoyer and Tim Walker on suggestions that will most beneficial to our members. Faulkner did suggest that our primary focus on any sort of feed should be a higher concentration of TDN and proteins. He also suggested names of vendors that provided those types of products and what he thought was a reasonable price. Taylor informed participants to not overlook our local resources such as the Neshoba County-Co-Op. Taylor informed us that the PBS network may be another resource in local a potential vendor for the bulk feed. Faulkner was more than happy to providing necessary information and/or ideas that could be of interest to our organization. He plans to return to the next meeting, February 7, 2011, to discuss his hay cutting and soil sample results.

Walker receives AI Training

LMS member Tim Walker participated in the Artificial Insemination (AI) training at Mississippi State University's Boost Center on November 4-6, 2010. This training will help members determine calving capabilities and identify animals with impending problems. Walker will be able to assist LMS members strengthen herds in size through selection of quality bulls and structuring breeding seasons. Also in attendance were members of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative, Willie Matthews and Lee Otis Mays. WCSHC provided sponsorship for participants. For more information visit: www.msucare.com/livestock/beef/aischool.

How do I become a Volunteer Firefighter?



Volunteer firefighting is a very rewarding and valuable way to serve your community. It takes dedication and many hours of training to become a firefighter. If you're willing to put in the time and effort, the Ofahoma Fire Department is a department ready for you to serve.

Making the decision to become a volunteer firefighter should not be taken lightly. It requires hours of training and a strong commitment to service. "We have a new fire station and truck for emergencies, but not enough people to man the facility

when emergencies arise", says one of Ofahomas volunteers, Kenneth Walker. The application process takes less than ten minutes and is simple. Requirements are simple also. First, you must pass a criminal background check and secondly, be able bodied and willing. Training, recertification and refresher courses will be conducted by the professional fire station staff in Carthage, MS on an as needed basis.

Assistance is being sought after from both males and females over the age of 18. The dedicated men and women respond to fire, medical, and hazard calls 24 hours a day. Assistance is needed for all areas such as: dispatch, drivers, basic CPR providers, etc. If you're not interested or may be aware of someone who is, please pass this information along.

Who knows, this could be the seed planted that changes or provides a more permanent career choice for someone. For more information on becoming a volunteer firefighter with the Ofahoma community, please contact Jeanette Greenwood @ 601.259.6095

Farm Field Day



Members of the LMS Farmers Connection Group gathered at Jeanette Greenwood's farm in the Ofahoma Community for cattle field day. LMS Farmers Connection Group partnered with WCSHC, Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine and delivered hands on experience with cattle health. College of Veterinary Medicine used the term and Timed-AI. Vet students actively participated in inspecting and determining if cattle were prime candidates for the artificial insemination program. They study whether or not ovulating heifers and heifers needed same dosages of the hormone to induce pregnancy.

LMS Farmers Connection Group Photo Gallery



Anthony Reed, Alcorn State University Extension State Plan Workshop Facilitator



LMS members at first meeting in May



Participants at the Estate Planning Workshop



LMS members at first meeting in May

