



California Association of Wheat Growers

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## Newsletter

November 19, 2010

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Upcoming Events

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- December 14 CAWG and CWC Board of Directors Meetings
- NAWG Commodity Classic March 2-3

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### Farm Service Agency Administrator Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections That Begin on Friday, Nov. 5

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 2010 - Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Jonathan Coppess announced today that the 2010 FSA county committee elections will begin tomorrow, Nov. 5, with USDA mailing ballots to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is Dec. 6, 2010.

"All eligible farmers and ranchers can make a difference by voting in this year's county committee elections," said Coppess. "County committee members will provide input and make important decisions on the local administration of new disaster and conservation programs under the 2008 Farm Bill. I particularly encourage minority and women producers to get involved so that county committees fairly represent the producers of a county or multi-county jurisdiction."

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support loans and payments; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities; emergency programs and payment eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. Agricultural producers in each county submitted candidate nominations during the nomination period, which ended on Aug. 2.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can obtain ballots from their local USDA Service Center. Dec. 6, 2010, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than Dec. 6. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2011. Close to 7,900 FSA county committee members serve in the 2,244 FSA offices nationwide. Each committee consists of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Approximately one-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. More information on county committees, such as the new 2010 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Funding Available for Wheat, Rice Breeding Doctoral Students

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Applications for the third round of funding from Monsanto's Beachell-Borlaug International Scholars Program are being accepted now through Feb. 1, 2011.

Funding through the program is available for scholars pursuing a doctorate in wheat or rice plant breeding.

The program is administered by Texas AgriLife Research and funded by Monsanto through 2012 with a \$10 million grant.

The program honors the accomplishments of its namesakes, Drs. Henry Beachell and Norman Borlaug, who pioneered plant breeding and research in rice and wheat, respectively.

Students participating in the program can be from anywhere in the world and can complete their Ph.D. programs at any university in the world that grants a Ph.D. in rice or wheat breeding.

However, students enrolled in a developing country university are required to complete part of their research program in Australia, Canada, the United States or Western Europe, and students studying in those countries must conduct at least one season of field work in a developing country.

Applications for the fellowships will be reviewed by an independent panel of global judges, with decisions made in May.

Students interested in applying for the program can find more details at [www.monsanto.com/mbbischolars](http://www.monsanto.com/mbbischolars).

### **NAWG Commodity Classic Opens Housing, Registration**

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Growers and others can now go online to www.commodityclassic.com to register for Commodity Classic and secure hotel rooms available through the Classic housing bureau.

Commodity Classic 2011, set for March 2 - 5 in Tampa, Fla., is NAWG's annual meeting and the convention and trade show of NAWG, the American Soybean Association, the National Corn Growers Association and the National Sorghum Producers.

Registration is available for growers-members of the four organizations, non-members, spouses and youth. One-day registrations are also available.

As in past years, growers who are members of NAWG can save \$100 off their Classic registration costs. Since many NAWG-affiliated state grower associations' annual dues are less than \$100, growers who are not yet members can often join their local grower association and register for Classic for less than the cost of a non-member registration.

Early registration rates are also available before Jan. 20.

Housing reservations can also be made online, though room at key hotels sold out quickly after the online registration option opened on Wednesday.

Hotel availability through the Classic organization is dependent upon arrival and departure dates and the number of guests. Classic attendees can also make reservations outside of the Classic system, though it is not recommended.

NAWG-specific events will be held at the Westin Harbour Island. NAWG policy committees will hold meetings throughout the day on March 2 and 3, and the NAWG Board of Directors will meet on March 5.

Aside from the sponsoring organization's business meetings, Commodity Classic will feature an 800-booth trade show, valuable educational sessions, technology demonstrations, association banquets and important networking opportunities.

Much more about Classic is available at <http://www.wheatworld.org/commodity-classic/>.

House GOP Endorses Boehner for Speaker, Pelosi Takes Minority Leader; Senate Leadership is Status Quo

House GOP leadership elections this week yielded no surprises as Rep. John Boehner (R, OH) was endorsed by his caucus to become the 53rd Speaker of the House, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D, CA) was elected minority leader for the 112th Congress which convenes January 5, 2011. Pelosi, however, fended off Rep. Heath Schuler (D, NC) who throughout his campaign for reelection called for Pelosi to step aside. The final vote was 150-43, and Pelosi continues to have significant dissatisfaction within her party. As Boehner looks forward to receiving the Speaker's gavel from Pelosi when the House formally convenes, he took the step of expanding his transition team to include two Democrats - Rep. Robert Brady (D, PA) and Robert Andrews (D, NJ). The transition team is charged with reviewing chamber rules, schedule and ways to cut administrative costs. Rep. Eric Cantor (R, VA) will serve as majority leader, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R, CA) will be majority whip, and Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R, TX) will serve as GOP conference chair. In addition, two new leadership slots were created for freshmen, going to Reps.-elect Tim Scott (R, SC) and Kristi Noem (R, SD). The Democrats elected Rep. Steny Hoyer (D, MD) to be minority whip, and Rep. James Clyburn (D, SC) will take a newly created assistant leader job. Over in the Senate, Sen. Harry Reid (D, NV) was reelected Majority Leader, and Sen. Mitch McConnell (R, KY) was elected minority leader.

Virginia Tech and Monsanto Announce Breeding Collaboration

Virginia Tech and Monsanto announced this week a collaboration they say will help both parties improve their wheat breeding programs and varieties.

Under the agreement's terms, which were not disclosed, it is expected Monsanto will gain access to Virginia Tech's wheat germplasm pool, and Virginia Tech will gain access to the advanced breeding technologies Monsanto continues to develop.

The agreement will focus initially on breeding for attributes that affect yield, including resistance to Fusarium head blight, known as scab, and drought resistance.

In a release, university officials said the partnership would leverage existing investments and increase their resources to do such work.

Carl Griffey, wheat breeder and professor of crop and soil environmental sciences at Virginia Tech, said working with companies like Monsanto will give Virginia Tech the potential to more efficiently develop better varieties for growers.

"Virginia Tech will have immediate access to the latest technologies for trait and line selection using marker-assisted breeding and, ultimately, timely access to unique value-added traits, both of

which will make wheat production more competitive and profitable," he said.

The release said the collaboration is non-exclusive, meaning both parties are free to form additional collaborative arrangements with other public or private entities. In fact, Griffey said Virginia Tech will continue to work with other public wheat breeding programs, as it has in the past.

The release also said Virginia Tech will continue efforts to develop and release wheat varieties with improved performance in the way it does today, through public, nonexclusive and exclusive variety releases marketed by local, state and regional seed companies.

The collaboration agreement was negotiated in consultation with the Virginia Grain Producers Association and is in accordance with principles for collaboration approved by the NAWG and U.S. Wheat Associates Joint Biotechnology Committee.

The Virginia Tech announcement is the second such agreement Monsanto has entered into with a public breeding program. In June, the company and Kansas State University announced a collaboration, also based on the Joint Biotech Committee's principles.

The announcement is one of many new wheat research investments and collaborations in the past few years, as NAWG and others in the wheat community have focused increased attention on the issue of wheat competitiveness and demonstrated growers' desire for wheat biotechnology.

To see a timeline of wheat research-related announcements since 2008, please go to www.wheatworld.org/biotech and click on "Wheat Research Investments Since 2008" in the "Related Resources".

WASHINGTON- U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) today made the following statement on becoming the next Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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"I am ready to lead the Senate Agriculture Committee in the 112th Congress. Agriculture is critical to Michigan's economy, employing a quarter of our workforce. Not only does agriculture create jobs and feed our families across America, but it is also helping us develop new fuels and energy sources.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, as we begin writing a new farm bill that once again recognizes the importance of America's agricultural economy and rural communities." -U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow.

Senator Stabenow has served on the Agriculture committees in the Michigan legislature, U.S. House of Representatives and currently the U.S. Senate. She was instrumental in achieving significant victories for Michigan in passage of the most recent Farm Bill, including the addition of a new fruit and vegetable title to the Act.