

# South Carolina Farm Bureau

## Legislative Report Week 5 February 10, 2023



### In This Issue

**Senate Highlights**

**House Highlights**

**New Bill Introductions**

**2023 YF&R Conference Recap**

**Newberry County Legislative Banquet**

**Farmer of the Week**

### Senate Finance Subcommittees Meet on the State's Agricultural Needs

State agencies testified in front of their respective Senate Finance Budget Subcommittees this week, providing a glimpse into their priorities and needs for the future. The Senate Finance Committee, concurrently with the House Ways & Means Committee, accepts the information provided by all state agencies in efforts to begin developing a statewide budget for the fiscal year. Below are a few examples of these budget requests related to agriculture:

#### **Clemson University – Public Service Activities (PSA)**

- \$15.4 million for the University's animal farm infrastructure;
- \$4.5 million non-recurring funds to support the Poultry Science Research Facility;
- \$2.3 million to support employee retention and recruitment;
- \$954,440 for problematic wildlife that impact agriculture.

#### **South Carolina State University – Public Service Activities (PSA)**

- \$2.5 million non-recurring funds to support small agribusiness expansion and reach new markets;
- \$500,00 Agriculture Innovation Research;
- \$500,000 for new farmer and beginner farmer assistance;
- \$350,000 for future farm planning by providing education and training to the small farm community.

## **Clemson University Requests Funding For a New College of Veterinary Medicine in South Carolina**

Clemson University is continuing to take steps toward to create a new College of Veterinary Medicine in South Carolina. In doing so, Clemson would provide the only in-state option for students in search of veterinary education. This would improve veterinary care for the state's livestock and agricultural industry immensely. Clemson President Jim Clements presented the requests at a recent Senate Finance budget subcommittee hearing where South Carolina Farm Bureau member and retired State Vet, Dr. Boyd Parr, testified on the needs for additional veterinarians in South Carolina.

Below is the budget request:

- \$30 million in capital funds to support a new College of Veterinary Medicine in South Carolina. The request in capital funds would provide the resources for site preparation and construction documents for bidding purposes, important steps in obtaining a "letter of reasonable assurance," the first step towards accreditation with the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education;
- \$2.5 million in recurring funds to assist in the next step of hiring a Founding Dean for the new College along with other essential staff to begin development of a detailed academic program and assist in facilities design completion.

## **Senate Ag Committee Meets**

The Senate Ag Committee met this week to take up Senate bill 449. Committee Chairman [Wes Climer](#) (Senate District 15 - York County) presided over the hearing that ultimately saw the bill voted out of full committee unanimously. The bill now heads to the full Senate floor for discussion. The bill extends the sunset clause on the Illegal Transportation of Feral Hogs for two (2) years to 2026.

## **Full House Approves Child Food and Nutrition Study**

The House of Representatives passed H. 3312 this week which creates a Child Food and Nutrition Services Study Committee. [First Vice Chair Patrick Haddon](#) (House District 19 - Greenville County) is the primary sponsor of the bill. The bill directs the study committee to evaluate and provide recommendations to the General Assembly on transferring the South Carolina Farm to School Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and various food and dairy safety programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Agriculture. The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

## **South Carolina Equine Advancement Act Moves Forward**

Senate Family and Veterans' Services Committee met this week and voted [S.303](#), the SC Equine Advancement Act, favorably out of full committee. The bill, sponsored by [Chairwoman Katrina Shealy](#) (Senate District 23 - Lexington County) establishes the South Carolina Equine Commission for the enhancement of the equine industry in the state. The bill also creates a structure for pari-mutuel wagering. The bill now heads to the full Senate.

## **New Introductions**

### **Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act of 2023 – H.3884**

[Rep. Patrick Haddon](#) also introduced House bill 3884 this week. This bill prohibits unauthorized individuals from entering an animal protection zone without consent on a farm, facility or premises on which farm animals are kept or located. The bill also prohibits the hindrance, obstruction, interference or interaction with

a farm animal on a motor vehicle for transportation and to outline penalties. H. 3884 was referred to the House Ag Committee.

## 2023 SC Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Conference

SC Farm Bureau held the Annual YF&R Conference in Greenville, February 3-5, 2023. The event brought together over 400 young farmers and agriculturalists between the ages of 18-35 from all across the state of South Carolina. As agriculture becomes more diverse, the SCFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Conference aims to bring together young farmers and ag enthusiasts from across the state and encourages them to join together as a unified voice, providing sessions that will meet diverse educational interests. The conference featured educational, networking, and leadership development opportunities for all attendees.

During the event, SC Farm Bureau recognized the winners of the annual *South Carolina Farm Bureau YF&R Achievement Award* and the *Excellence in Agriculture Award*.

Below are the winners:

### Matt Stevens - YF&R Achievement Award Winner

The Achievement Award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who derive the majority of their income from an owned agricultural operation and have excelled in their farming or ranching operations while exhibiting superior leadership abilities.

A sixth-generation farmer, Matt Stevens, of Horry-Loris, farms nearly 2,000 acres where he grows 19 different crops including tobacco, soybeans, sweet corn, hemp and a variety of vegetables, was awarded the 2023 Achievement Award at the conference. He has grown his commercial cattle herd to 26 cows/calf pairs. Matt runs two produce stands and sells seasonal produce year-round. Stevens Farms Produce, open year-round, sells local products and holiday inventory in addition to their fruits and vegetables grown on the farm. The other stand is open seasonally.

Matt is active in his community and was appointed to the State Young Farmer and Rancher Committee for the 2023 - 2025 term along with his wife, Ashlyn. Matt will have the opportunity to represent South Carolina Farm Bureau on trips to the 2023 American Farm Bureau Fusion Conference and the 2024 American Farm Bureau Annual Convention.

**Congratulations to Matt!**



## Michael Plumblee - YF&R Excellence in Ag Competition Award Winner

The Excellence in Agriculture competition consists of a written application and an oral presentation in front of a panel of judges. Dr. Michael Plumblee, of Newberry County, won the 2023 South Carolina Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award and was recognized at the conference.

Michael is an Assistant Professor of Agronomy and serves the state as the Corn and Soybean Extension Agronomist. His family has been farming for 5 generations, and he helps on the family farm every weekend and holiday. Michael has a part-time business called M&M Deer Corn where he harvests, bags and sells corn to deer hunters in his area. He is active with Newberry County Farm Bureau where he is a member of the board of directors and serves as the chair of the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee. Michael advocates for agriculture by writing letters to local congressmen and speaking with middle and high school students about agriculture.

Michael and his wife Allison have been appointed to the State Young Farmer and Rancher Committee for the 2023 - 2025 term. Plumblee will have the opportunity to represent South Carolina Farm Bureau on trips to the 2023 American Farm Bureau Fusion Conference in Jacksonville, Florida and the 2024 American Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

### Congratulations to Michael!



## Newberry County Farm Bureau Legislative Banquet

Members of the Newberry County House and Senate delegations along with other local elected officials were honored at an appreciation banquet this week. Dr. Boyd Parr, Newberry County SCFB Legislative Chairman, gave a legislative update highlighting priorities important to the county and agriculture as a whole, including funding for ag priorities, single agency water consolidation, solutions for problematic wildlife and loss of ag land statewide.

Thank you to Senator Cromer, Rep. Joe White and all local elected officials for attending and supporting SCFB!

## Farmer of the Week

This week our team hosted **Chris Copeland** of Metrolina Greenhouses in York County as our *SCFB Farmer of the Week*.

Chris serves as Chief Operating Officer of Metrolina Greenhouse operations in York, SC and Huntersville, NC. This family-run nursery operation celebrated 50 years in business last year and supplies live plants to over 1,500 locations in 13 states for their three main customers: Lowe's, Home Depot and Wal-Mart.

Currently, under the company's founding family and Chris's leadership, Metrolina distributes 75 million live plants per year from their over 400 acres of production space, representing \$500 million of retail value to their partners.

Chris and Metrolina Greenhouses serve as outstanding representatives of agriculture and agribusiness in South Carolina, and we are proud to call him our *SCFB Farmer of the Week*.

