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## ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENTS AND SPECIALISTS

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Dear AACAAAS Member:

The 2008 Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents and Specialists (AACAAAS) Annual Meeting / Professional Improvement Conference (AM/PIC) will be held in Mobile at the Radisson Admiral Semmes Hotel located at 251 Government Street downtown. Make plans now to join us on June 3<sup>rd</sup> for the pre-conference tours with the AM/PIC to follow June 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>. A block of rooms at the rate of \$95.00 per day is being held for our meeting under the block name of Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents and Specialists. Parking in the adjoining deck is available for \$6.00 per day with in and out privileges. The block will be held through May 19, 2008 for your convenience. Book your room today, by contacting the hotel directly at (251) 432-8000 or 1-800-333-3333.

We will again this year feature increased professional development opportunities beginning with the pre-conference PPT tours. Pre-conference tours are scheduled for Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> with an Agronomy tour hosted by Buck Fariior, an Animal Science tour hosted by Anthony Wiggins, a Horticulture (Commercial and Home Grounds) tour hosted by Chazz Hesselein and Mike McQueen and a Forestry/Natural Resources tour hosted by Beau Brodbeck. Most of the PPT tours will depart from the Admiral Semmes Hotel on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Look for more tour details to come via your PPT tour hosts. In the meantime if you have suggestions or questions regarding these pre-conference tours, please contact the individual tour coordinators (hosts).

The 2008 AM/PIC kicks off on Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> with three morning seminars. The first beginning at 8:00 a.m. will focus on effective methods of collecting program impact data to use in reporting and marketing your Extension programs. Packaging Extension Programs for the Media will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will include presenters from a variety of media outlets. Alabama Power will follow at 11:00 a.m. with current information on the Land Application of FGD Gypsum, a topic with widespread interest throughout all Program Priority teams. In addition an optional workshop on photography---shooting and editing---will be available for those interested from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Registration for the 2008 AM/PIC will open at 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. Recreational activities including golf(Buck Fariior), shooting sports (Jimmy Smitherman), fishing (James Miles), tennis (Shane Harris), and new to this year's conference, birding (Chazz Hesselein) will be held in the afternoon followed by a low-country shrimp boil in the evening at Five Rivers Alabama Delta Resource Center on the Causeway. Chazz offers a unique experience for those bird watchers or those interested in learning more about the hobby. Buck (251-867-7760) would like for those golfers to contact him prior to the conference with your handicap to be used in setting up the teams. Please contact these recreational activity organizers for more information regarding activity details, costs, etc.

Our planning committee has put together a great tour on Dauphin Island of ACES Marine Fisheries Research and Extension programming for Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup> to accompany our awards program, business meetings, and annual recognition banquet and scholarship auction that evening. This year's AACAAAS Professional Improvement Tour for members, life members and guests features a close-up look into the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium, the Shellfish Lab oyster research, and current offshore redfish research.

The Spouses' Tour is exciting as well, with plans to discover Historic Mobile starting with a relaxing guided walking tour to the Portier House and Cathedral Square park, a visit to the Cathedral, then on to the Police Museum

and the Mobile Arts Council Office. Following lunch at The Pillar's and a stop at Historic Oakleigh House and Museum the tour will conclude with shopping opportunities in historic Spring Hill.

The Youth Program begins with a get acquainted ice cream social around the pool on Wednesday afternoon and moves to fun-fun-fun on Thursday with an adventure on "The Duke" ---a 44 foot educational vessel Mobile Bay bound from Dauphin Island offering a close look at sea life and wildlife of the Bay and Delta including a plankton net drag, a touch lab aquarium, and many, many observation opportunities. The day will also include Historic Fort Gaines, a seafood supper, and a night at the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center. Friday morning will include a tour of the Battleship USS Alabama and Battleship Memorial Park. Contact Mandy Marks (251-574-8445) for more information and to volunteer to help chaperone and provide transportation.

The 2008 annual meeting settles down to a conclusion on Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup> with our annual Memorial Breakfast, Extension Directors update, business meetings, and our Annual Life Members Luncheon at noon.

Please mark your calendar and prepare to spend June 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> getting to know your fellow agents, learning more about a different area of the state, improving your skills and networking capacity and being recognized for quality work. Enjoy our Poster Session again this year and of course you will have ample opportunity to interact with our participating sponsors and exhibitors. Attached is a two (2) page registration form to pre-register for the 2008 AACAAS AM/PIC. I urge you to complete the form and remit it along with your registration fees, today. The deadline to pre-register is May 15<sup>th</sup> (must be post-marked) after which registration fees increase. We cannot guarantee any conference meals with on-site registrations. Also, please remember to bring your items for the scholarship auction and of course your pocketbooks.

We look forward to seeing you on the Gulf Coast in June.

Sincerely,

Jim G. Todd  
President, AACAAS