



Louisiana Conservation and Commodity Updates July 2020; Issue-7

Pollination with Soap Bubbles

A new study published in Science demonstrated a technique to pollinate a pear orchard with soap bubbles without damaging the flowers or the fruit's quality. The authors claim the experiment can be a low-cost alternative to disappearing natural pollinators, especially bees. [The news release about the study can be read here \(https://bit.ly/3fAlqzv\)](https://bit.ly/3fAlqzv). On the other hand, an annual survey of more than 3,000 beekeepers indicated pollinator colonies' loss was 22% compared to 28% the year before. It is the smallest loss in 14 years.

House Appropriations Bill

The House Appropriations Committee released a summary of the bills. A total of \$24 billion is allocated for agriculture, rural development, and FDA. [A detailed overview can be read here \(https://bit.ly/2DJlnTK\)](https://bit.ly/2DJlnTK). Highlights include -

The total budget for agricultural research is \$3.3 billion, \$92 million higher than the FY-2020 level. An additional investment of \$990 million for rural broadband through the ReConnect program. The total budget for farm programs is \$1.835 billion, \$30 million higher than the FY-2020 level, which includes

- \$1 billion is for conservation programs, which includes \$167 million for infrastructure for watershed and flood prevention and watershed rehabilitation projects.
- \$5 million for resolving farmland succession issues.

Bayer to use an independent review team –

Bayer has settled litigation around the safety of Roundup for a massive \$11 billion. It has settled for another \$300 million for dicamba damages that occurred in the past five years. On the other hand, Bayer will set aside \$1.2 billion for research by an independent panel of experts studying glyphosate claims being a carcinogen. A federal judge will finalize the proposal and the panel of experts.

Seeking \$10 Billion for coastal restoration

House Ocean Caucus led a 66 member group to seek \$10 billion for coastal restoration programs. Some of the priorities include-

- Establish a National Coastal Resilience Fund and resiliency and habitat grant program
- Allocate \$166 million for the National Estuarine Research reserves to support coastal and estuarine projects
- Invest \$100 million in Integrated Ocean Observing System for weather forecasting
- \$100 million for the National Sea Grant program
- Strengthen coastal zone management grants, coastal resiliency grants that support coastal communities, mitigate coastal hazards, restore habitat, and protect coastal water quality. [The letter can be read here \(https://bit.ly/3je70Hg\)](https://bit.ly/3je70Hg).

H2Ohio program addresses nutrient runoff

With a budget of \$170 million, managed by the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, the farmers in lake Erie watershed be offered up to \$60/acre for practices that better incorporate manure into the soil, apply fertilizer under the topsoil, and plant cover crops. The programs aim to achieve an established benchmark of reducing nutrient runoff, mainly phosphorous, into Lake Erie by 40% by 2025. Any remaining funds will be used to expand wetlands.

Soil Health GAP (SHG)

The term coined by a soil scientist from the University of Nebraska refers to the difference in soil health in undisturbed native soil and the current soil health in cropland. Questions do remain - what is a realistically achievable soil health goal on farmlands; however, the SHG sets some standards to optimize management practices toward minimizing the SHG value.

New options added to crop insurance

On July 6th, the USDA announced flexibilities to the crop insurance program and opened the 60-day comment period. Specific changes of interest include:

- A new quality loss option allows the replacement of post quality production amounts with pre-quality production in Actual Production History (APH) calculations, which can increase yield amounts for individual years.
- For Enterprise Units and Multi-County Enterprise, a new unit structure allows for a producer that doesn't qualify for enterprise units on both of their practices (either irrigated non-irrigated or FAC, NFAC) an enterprise unit may be applied to the qualifying unit and may have the other practice as a basic or optional unit.

USMCA goes into effect

USMCA officially went into effect on July 1st, 2020. The agreement, which was passed by the Senate on January 16th and first covered in this Newsletter in the January issue, is the trade deal between the United States, Canada, and Mexico replacing the NAFTA agreement. The agreement mostly focuses on dairy, eggs, and poultry. Primary beneficiaries of the USMCA are dairy with tariff-free access to the Canadian dairy market, which is expected to have 3.5% of its market. Tariff quotas have also been changed with eggs and poultry, seeing annual increases in export over the next sixteen years.

Rockefeller Refuge project

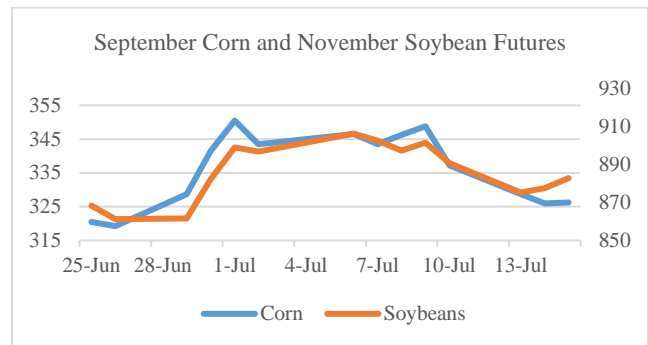
Sponsored by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), the Rockefeller Refuge project – a new section of breakwater along four miles of shoreline in the refuge – was completed in June 2020 with a budget of \$34 million. The coastline in the refuge area has been retreating at an average rate of 50 feet per year. The new breakwater protects more than 250 acres of coastal marsh, with gaps to allow water and fish to

pass through. This project reduces erosion along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline, protects saline marsh habitat, and enhances fish and wildlife habitat.



Source: NOAA

WASDE update



The latest WASDE report was released on July 10th. The current projections have season-average corn prices 15 cents higher than June projections to \$3.35/bu, soybean prices projecting 30 cents higher than June to \$8.50/bu, cotton up 2 cents to \$0.59/lb and rice down 20 cents to \$12.70/cwt. Corn prices increased primarily on a downward adjustment of projected harvested acres, which brought ending stocks down. Harvested acres for soybeans were adjusted upward by 200 thousand acres and increased crush, bringing total use up by 15 million bushels. The fall continues to be monitored as some forecasts are for dryer than anticipated late season conditions and increased export demand from China, typical for soybeans.

Authors: Dr. Naveen Adusumilli; 318-884-0514 (m); nadusumilli@agcenter.lsu.edu; Dr. Lawson Connor; 225-578-4566; lconnor@agcenter.lsu.edu; Dr. Hua Wang; 225-578-2712; hwang23@lsu.edu; Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.