



Volume 18, Issue 1

January/February 2025

Agricultural Newsletter of the LSU AgCenter's Iberia Cooperative Extension Service

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Introduction

This is the first edition of Headland Highlights for 2025, so let me begin by saying Happy New Year. I hope all of you fared well during the cold weather we experienced recently. I think most people, more specifically, farmers, start each year with a sense of optimism. They look forward to the many opportunities that lie ahead for everyone. It is also typical to look back and reflect on what occurred during the previous year. Most of our crops (sugarcane, soybeans, rice) ended up with respectable yields and market prices for some of our crops and livestock have remained favorable.

With 2024 in our past, we can turn our attention to 2025. There are many reasons for optimism this year, including an excellent production year (plant cane and stubble cane appear to be in good shape, and a great amount of field work was done in the fall). There is, however, also reason for concern. Inputs, especially labor, equipment, fuel, pesticides, and fertilizer costs will remain on the high end in 2025. It has been said by others before me, but I think it is worth repeating that it is important that everyone involved in the local agriculture industry examines their farming operations and makes wise business decisions that are best suited for their individual farms for 2025 and beyond.

I am glad to have all our crops harvested. 2025 has started off with cold weather concerns and several meetings are just around the corner. Much of the remainder of this newsletter contains specific information related to many of these upcoming educational programming efforts that are intended for those involved in the agriculture industry in Teche/Acadiana area.

Sugarcane Production Academy Meeting(s)

Now that the 2024 sugarcane harvest is complete, it allows time for the annual Sugarcane Production Academy meetings. Producers and those involved in the sugarcane industry are encouraged to attend these informative meetings to catch up on the latest cultural practices and production information related to the sugarcane industry.

A sugarcane production meeting will be conducted for those of you who conduct business in the parishes of Iberia, St. Mary, and Vermilion. Details are as follows:

What: 2025 Iberia/St. Mary/Vermilion Sugarcane Production Academy
When: Wednesday, January 29th, 2025 (8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon)
• **Please Note: Lunch will be served at approximately 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**
Where: Ward 8 Recreation Building, 803 Hubertville Road, Jeanerette, Louisiana
Program: Will consist of the latest updates on Sugar Production and Cultural Practices with presentations related to: Fertility, Disease Control, Economics, and a Crop Summary

We will also conduct a production meeting for those of you who conduct business in the parishes of St. Martin, Acadia, and Lafayette. Details are as follows:

What: 2025 St. Martin, Acadia, and Lafayette Sugarcane Production Academy
When: Friday, January 31st, 2025 (8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon)
• **Please Note: Lunch will be served at approximately 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**
Where: St. Martin Parish Extension Office – 114 Courthouse Street, Breau Bridge, LA
Program: Will consist of the latest updates on Sugar Production, and Cultural Practices with presentations related to: Fertility, Disease Control, Economics, and a Crop Summary

Sugarcane Advisory Committee

The Iberia/St. Mary/Vermilion Sugarcane Advisory Committee Meeting has been **tentatively** set for Wednesday, January 29th, 2025 at the Ward 8 Recreation Center, 803 Hubertville Road, in Jeanerette, Louisiana. Details for this committee meeting will be sent separately to committee members.

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification, and Burn Manager Recertification Meeting

The Iberia/St. Mary Pesticide Recertification and Burn Manager Recertification has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 26th, 2025. Further details will be sent out in the near future.

ASSCT Meeting

The 2025 meeting of the Louisiana American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT) is scheduled for February 3-5 at L' Auberge Casino & Hotel in Baton Rouge. The General Session begins on Tuesday morning (February 4th) at 9:30 a.m. This appears to be an excellent meeting for the sugarcane industry and your attendance is encouraged.

Spring Beef Cattle Field Day

The 2025 Spring Beef Cattle Field Day has been scheduled for Saturday, March 15th at the Iberia Research Station in Jeanerette from 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Further details will be sent out in the near future.

Louisiana Crops Newsletter

The latest issue of the LSU AgCenter's Louisiana Crops Newsletter is available online at the following address: <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/articles/page1729101955800>. If you are receiving this by mail only and would like a copy of the Louisiana Crops Newsletter, please contact me at the Iberia Extension Office. If you are growing other row crops other than sugarcane this is an excellent source of information.

Other

In late 2024, the U.S. Farm Bill was extended, therefore, it will, again, remain at the fore in 2025. We have several new Senators and Representatives in office, therefore, the agriculture community should keep an eye on Washington, D.C.

This fall, our country elected a "new" President. It is paramount for the local agriculture community to have and maintain a good working relationship with our U.S. and state leaders/legislators.

During the past year we lost members of our local agriculture community. Please keep these individuals and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

Listed below are dates to remember for 2025:

January

- January 22-25 – Acadiana District 4-H Livestock Show, Blackham Coliseum, Lafayette
- January 29 – Iberia/St. Mary/Vermilion Sugarcane Production Academy Meeting – Ward 8, Jeanerette
- January 31 – St. Martin/Lafayette/Acadia Sugarcane Production Meeting – St. Martin Extension Office, Breaux Bridge

February

- February 3-5 – ASSCT Meeting – L'Auberge Casino & Hotel, Baton Rouge
- February 11-18 – LSU AgCenter State 4-H Livestock Show, LDEC, Gonzales
- February 26 – Iberia/St. Mary Pesticide Recertification Meeting, and Burn Manager Recertification Meeting, Ward 8, Jeanerette
- February 27 - Farm Bureau Labor Meeting, Port Allen

March

- March 15 - Spring Beef Cattle Field Day – Iberia Research Station, Jeanerette

Closing

It seems fair to say that most people are optimistic at the start of each calendar year. Many in the agriculture industry feel confident about our crops and livestock from a production standpoint; however, the anticipated high input costs for 2025 are of concern. The vast majority of the plant cane crop appears to be in good shape thanks to the weather during the last quarter of 2024. Also, a good amount of field work was done in the fall, which should allow producers to be on schedule as they prepare for 2025.

Despite the cold weather in January, hay meadows and pastures seem to be faring well this winter, as well as the body condition of our beef cattle. Stockyard prices for beef also appear strong. I am sure that 2025 will provide us with its own set of challenges, but I am confident that with continued hard work, resolve and dedication, we can maintain a strong and vibrant local agriculture community.

If you have email and you are not receiving emails from me or if this is the first correspondence you receive from me, please email your email address to me so that you can get this information via the internet. My email address is bhebert@agcenter.lsu.edu. If you do not have access to email and would like any referenced material in this newsletter mailed to you, please contact me at the Iberia Extension office of the LSU AgCenter (337) 369-4440 so that this information can be sent to you.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the upcoming events planned for our area, and if you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me at the Iberia Extension office of the LSU AgCenter.

Sincerely,

Blair J. Hebert

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County Agent/Parish Chairman

Iberia Parish