

Alabama Cotton, Soybeans, and Wheat and Feed Grains Strategic Plan

I. Identify measurable goals for cotton, soybeans, and wheat and feed grains that will contribute to Alabama's economy and employment.

1. Urge the development of public economic incentives to fund the enhancement of crop production (e.g., irrigation systems, harvesting systems, etc.) and other industry segments and their capital investments.
2. Develop programs and strategies to restore textile and apparel manufacturing within Alabama and attract capital for other cotton industry segments to further support our industry (e.g., modernization of gins, warehouses, etc.)
3. Increase wheat and soybean yields, quality, and acres through an extensive Alabama Extension, Department of Agriculture and Industries, and Alabama Farmers Federation campaign.
4. Increase every year the statewide average yield of major agronomic crops (corn, cotton, soybean, and peanut).
5. Amend the "irrigation initiative" to the Alabama Agricultural Investment Initiative.

II. Develop and implement a strategy to remove barriers to your success and to foster success.

- Seek and create new approaches to collaborate with other state business interests and organizations to fully integrate agriculture economic interests in any and all economic incentive programs and other initiatives to enhance economic development.
- Work with the Alabama Department of Commerce and other nongovernment economic development organizations to research, identify, and recruit new and expanding textile and apparel businesses.
- Renew investment in our experiment stations.

- Increase irrigation infrastructure, adapt new production practices, and use new higher yielding varieties resistant to insect and disease.
- Include in the Alabama Agricultural Investment Initiative a new zero sales tax on permanent capital investments (e.g., gins, elevators, mills, irrigation systems, processing plants, chicken houses, etc.).

III. Identify public policy or regulatory changes needed to achieve your goals.

- Legislate a new structure to fund capital investments for research and extension of research.
- Research other public policies for the inclusion of our industries.
- Get "real" on environmental regulations in Montgomery.
- Change the attitude about "conservation" in Alabama from retiring land to making land more productive while maintaining the environment.
- Inform the general public that GMO crops are a necessity to feed the growing population.

IV. Identify the research and Extension issues you need addressed to achieve your goals.

- Research knowledge, like money, should be fungible and seamless. Be all inclusive and leverage resources and efforts among public and private organizations, in state and beyond our borders. Urge inter- and multidisciplinary approaches where practical.
- We need the Extension to continue research and development on new varieties of soybeans, cotton, wheat, corn, etc.

V. Identify the communications needed to achieve your goals.

- Our communications need to be ubiquitous, which is attainable with social media. Likewise, the methodologies can be overwhelming, which increases the need for content delivery, aggregation, and management skills. The paradox is the more provided the less we need.
- Our consumers need to hear and see from us every day. They need to see how we make life better each and every day for each of them. Our message needs to be crafted with the

customer in mind. Let's give the answer to their all-important question: What's in it for me?

- Alabama is unique when it comes to our three agricultural universities and especially with Tuskegee University's Congressional standing. The three need a unique vehicle to travel together in seeking new funding opportunities while not eroding each other competitively. Depending on the targeted source, each can be leveraged to facilitate the awarding of new funding, especially with current trends to broaden collaborative research and extension. Communication, both to internal and external audiences, is key in this approach.
- Extension needs to change from one agent in every county to the best agents in the country.
- Continue a close relationship with the university professors and support them with our check-off dollars.