



February 22, 2019

### Inside this issue

This Week at the Statehouse

- [Legislative Update - Week Seven](#)

Disaster Relief (Priority Issue)

- [Update of Disaster Relief](#)

Congressional Report

- [National News](#)

### This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - Week Seven

**Issue: Deer Tag System**

With unanimous support, the House of Representatives passed [H. 3750](#) this week - a bill that would seek to modify the doe tag system by getting rid of the eight date-specific antlerless deer days. This bill is a product of a compromise between SCFB and SCDNR. With a big game license, hunters will now receive two antlerless deer tags that can be used at any time with the option of purchasing four more additional antlerless deer tags. If a hunter purchases the four additional antlerless deer tags, then SCDNR will provide two additional antlerless deer tags to be used in game zones 3 & 4 free of charge to the purchaser which will be handled administratively by SCDNR. This bill seeks to simplify the deer tag system while still providing ample opportunities to harvest does in South Carolina. The bill was introduced to the Senate this week and will be sent to the Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee.

*(S-A) 1. Deer and Wildlife Issues - When South Carolina farmers' viability is threatened due*

*to wildlife damage, they should be allowed to deal with the wildlife like any pest that threatens a crop. Understanding that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is charged by the State of South Carolina to manage certain species of wildlife, SC Farm Bureau will work with DNR and other appropriate agencies to make sure that the farmer's livelihood is protected and our game animals are managed properly. We support a reasonable limit on antlered bucks and a deer tagging program for all deer that will enhance the management of the deer herd in South Carolina. The farmers should continue to use depredation tags to control deer herds as well as work with DNR in educating hunters to harvest the proper number of does. We also support funding for DNR to help educate landowners and farmers in dealing with wildlife issues on their property. If the DNR cannot control the wildlife damage and the farmer's livelihood is put in jeopardy by wildlife managed and owned by the state, then the state should create an indemnity bond to compensate farmers for the burden of feeding the state's wildlife. Further, maximum effort should be made to deal with damage from non-game species as well.*

*The Department of Natural Resources should evaluate and localize our state's deer population zone by zone and work to reduce the total population in our state where the herd is at controllable levels and it is again viable to grow crops profitably.*

**Issue: Hemp**

The House of Representatives gave second reading to [H. 3449](#) - The SC Department of Agriculture's plan to regulate hemp in South Carolina. With the passing of the 2018 Farm bill, hemp is now a recognized commodity under federal law and states are required to submit a plan to USDA for approval as to how they will regulate the crop. H. 3449 details how SCDA will move forward with a program that would open up the ability for more growers to grow hemp without an acre limit. H. 3449 will be given third reading and then be sent to the Senate for their consideration.

*SCFB supports the Department of Agriculture regulating hemp in South Carolina.*

**Priority Issue: Dams Safety Program**

GR Staff continue to educate members of the Senate of the importance in passing [S. 107 - The Dams & Safety Program Bill](#). It is important to contact your senator to tell them to support S. 107 because it is a common sense bill that improves safety within the dam safety program, concentrates DHEC's limited resources on our significant and high hazard dams, and provides much needed relief of the financial burden placed on dam owners facing repairs from reclassification due to encroaching urban sprawl into rural areas. Please contact your senator

today to share this important message!

*(SN - GP) Dams and Reservoir. South Carolina Farm Bureau supports reasonable standards concerning the construction, inspection, maintenance, and repair of all high risk pond dams.*

[Top](#)

## **Disaster Relief (Priority Issue)**

### **Update of Disaster Relief**

We have been actively working with the Governor and key leadership in the South Carolina House and Senate; and, with our Congressmen and Senators in Washington discussing Disaster Relief from the flooding and loss of crops. We continue to let them know how very important this is for the livelihood of our rural economy and agriculture in our State!

[Top](#)

## **Congressional Report**

### **National News**

The Chief Economist for the USDA on the state of farm economy in 2019 is as uncertain as in the 1990's with low commodity prices weighing on farm economy for years to come.

This week the Issue Advisory Committees for the American Farm Bureau Federation met in Washington, DC on Thursday and today (Friday). Attached is the meeting's agenda.