



National Ag Day, March 20, 2018



PLANNING AHEAD — Christopher Ables plans to pursue a career at the USDA after his 2019 graduation from UTM.

Ables takes internship with USDA

Growing up in West Tennessee ultimately prepared Christopher Ables, a junior from Martin, to study agricultural business at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

“(Agricultural) business is not just about understanding how a farm works, but how rural America works,” he said.

As part of UT Martin’s University Scholars Program, Ables is responsible for completing a two-year academic research project. His research analyzes whether variable-rate planting is a cost-effective solution to rollover damage caused by certain irrigation systems. Commonly used irrigation systems have wheels that are 20-30 inches wide and run over a certain portion of the crop as the system rotates.

Using advances in GPS technology, variable-rate planting would program the planter to skip those areas, saving both seed and fertilizer.

In Jan. 2017, Ables began working with the United States Department of Agriculture through an internship program at their Union City service center. He has handled everything from loan and grant processing to bringing people from diverse backgrounds together to complete a project.

“A lot of what we do is partnerships, and I really like seeing how you can pull groups of people together to give back to a community I love so much,” he said.

Completion of an internship is an academic requirement for Ables’ major; however, he advises other students to complete internships as well.

“It’s definitely worth it. You get to see what day-to-day work is actually like, giving you hands-on experience to understand the work,” he said.

While at UT Martin, Ables has served as a Peer Enabling Program leader for the university’s First-Year Initiative that acclimates freshmen to college life; president for Rotoract, a Rotary-sponsored community service organization; and both treasurer and secretary of the University Scholars Organization.

Ables plans to graduate in May of 2019 and hopes to continue working with the USDA.

Agriculture: Food for Life message for National Ag Day

The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will host National Agriculture Day on March 20, 2018 (today). This will mark the 45th anniversary of National Ag Day, which is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2018 is “Agriculture: Food For Life.”

Today, the ACA will host major events in the nation’s capital including an event at the National Press Club as well as a Taste of Agriculture Celebration. Additionally, the ACA will bring approximately 100 college students to Washington to deliver the message of Ag Day. These events honor National Agriculture Day and mark a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us.

A number of producers, agricultural associations, corporations, students and government organizations involved in agriculture are expected to participate. National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public’s awareness of agriculture’s role in modern society. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- * Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- * Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- * Value the essential role



of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.

* Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry. Career choices include farm production, agribusiness management and marketing, agricultural research and engineering, food science, processing and retailing, banking, education, landscape architecture, urban planning, energy and other fields

Increased knowledge of agriculture and nutrition allows individuals to make informed personal choices about diet and health. Informed citizens will be able to participate in establishing the policies that will support a competitive agricultural industry in this country and abroad.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 12th grade, all students should receive some systematic instruction about agriculture. Agriculture is too important a topic to be taught only to the small percentage of students considering careers in agriculture and pursuing vocational agricultural studies.

Agricultural literacy in-

cludes an understanding of agriculture’s history and current economic, social and environmental significance to all Americans. This understanding includes some knowledge of food, fiber and renewable resource production, processing and domestic and international marketing.

By far, the most effective part of this program is the role you play in helping spread the word. A few generations ago, most Americans were directly involved in—or had relatives or friends involved in—agricultural-related endeavors. Today, that is no longer the case. That is why it is so important that we join together at the community level...our voices, in concert, become a shout that carries our message a great deal further than any one of us can do alone! We are pleased that you have joined this effort to promote American agriculture.

In addition to the events in Washington, DC, today the ACA will once again feature the Ag Day Essay Contest. The winning essay will be presented on National Ag Day.

Visit www.agday.org for more information on National Ag Day in 2018.

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Boone Brown
Westview High School graduate (16)